

Helpful Tips for Effective Advocacy in Arlington County and the State of Virginia.

Step 1:

1. **Identify an area of concern, problem solve and suggest a possible solution.**
 - a. What is the problem?
 - b. Work as a group to find solutions to solve the problem?
 - c. Is it an county issue or state issue?
 - d. Does your suggestion need funding? Or is it just a attitude or protocol change?
2. **Establish a Goal:** Know your groups goal. When we work together with the same message we are able to advocate for a better outcome.
3. **Creating Your Public Comment:**
 - a. Start with sharing your story or the story of a loved one, make it short and to the point.
 - b. Highlight how your recommendations are a possible solution to the problem:
 - i. How will this improvement help your loved one.
 - ii. How will this improvement help others
 - c. End with a strong closing, for example: As individuals and family members living with mental health challenges, ***every day of our lives***-- we ask that the Arlington and/or Commonwealth of Virginia to invest in building a (fill in with request) that will help Arlingtonian's and/or Virginians who experience mental health or disability crisis—***before the crisis occurs***. By adopting the recommendations above we will be strengthening one part of that safety net for everyone.

Step 2:

1. **Make contact with -**
 - o When advocating for improvements of a program contact the manager or a supervisor of that program,
 - o When advocating for change in a county program make contact with your county board member,
 - o As a group set up an appointment to discuss with manager, supervisor or county board,
 - o Write letters, emails and make phone calls.
 - o Sometimes it takes many attempts to make a connection, be persistent.

Step 3:

1. **Press coverage** can help you find others in the community who might have a similar issue, who might be interested in joining your advocacy group. Sometimes an organization will not believe your problem is real until they see it in the press. Local Press:
 - a. **Sun Gazette:** [Sun Gazette Newspapers](#), 131 E. Broad St. #202, Falls Church Va. 22046, 703-738-2520
 - b. [ARLnow](#) or email at arlingtonnews@gmail.com.
 - c. [Washington Post](#): Main phone numbers: 202.334.6000 or 800.627.1150. Address: The Washington Post, 1301 K Street NW, Washington DC 20071

Arlington Mental Health & Disability Alliance

Arlington County Contacts:

[Arlington County Organizational Chart](#). This site includes email contact information for county board members and much more.

County Board - [Open Door Mondays](#) - this is great opportunity to take a group and speak to a county board member. Every Monday is a different board member and a different location in Arlington.

Arlington County Department of Human Services (DHS) [Meetings](#) are open to the public for public comment. Remember our county works for us the tax payer and our residents. Committee meetings are held monthly. Come to a meeting with your advocacy group, state your request to make a public comment at the beginning of the meeting. One representative should be the spokesperson. Present your concerns, keep it short, keep it simple when finished ask for next steps.

Community Services Board (ACCSB)

3rd Wednesday – 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Public comment is limited to 5 minutes. At the discretion of the CSB Chair, additional time may be given. There will be a brief opportunity for the board members to ask questions but no discussion of the matter will be held at the time.

Additional Sub Committees monthly [meetings](#):

Administration Committee, Child & Youth Committee, Executive Committee, Mental Health Committee, Developmental Disability Committee, and Substance Use Committee Disabilities Committee

Arlington County Mental Health Services*:

DHS Director, [Anita Friedman](#),

DHS Deputy Director, [Deborah Warren](#)

Behavioral Healthcare Division Chief, [John Palmieri](#)

- 1) Aging/Disability Service Director, Vacant
- 2) Operations Support, [Rudbel Alfaro](#)
- 3) Psychiatric Services Bureau, Lilian Tidler
- 4) Client Service Entry Bureau, Arnecia Moody
 - a) Emergency Services, [Alexs Mapes](#)
 - b) Intake & Assessment (Same Day Access) & Discharge Planning, Mark Doering
- 5) Outpatient Services Bureau, [Alan Orenstien](#)
 - a) Support Team A, Denise Shelli Wargo
 - b) Support Team B, Carol Sacks
 - c) Support Team C, Alexis Speight
 - d) Outpatient Services, Octavia Madison
 - e) PACT Team, [Luis Marcano](#)
 - f) Employment Services, Jose Campos
- 6) Residential & Specialized Service Bureau, Suzanne Sommerville
 - a) MH Residential, Chinomso Ememe
 - b) Residential Care Management, Penelope Donovan
 - c) MH Jail Services, Shanne Daley
 - d) SA ACT Jail Unit, Audrey Graham
 - e) Clarendon House, [Rebecca Wright](#)
 - f) Homeless Case Management, Grace Guerrero

**See AMHDA.ORG Resource Page for Org Chart*

Arlington County Disability Services*:

[Carol Skelly](#) is chair of the Developmental Disability Committee

[La Voyce Reid](#) is the Developmental Disability Services Bureau Chief at Arlington County, VA

**See AMHDA.ORG Resource Page for Org Chart*

Arlington Mental Health & Disability Alliance

Virginia State Contacts:

If your issue that can be improved by a state legislative change, contact your state representatives.

Patrick Hope is your Arlington Delegate, [email](#) him, call him and/or ask for a meeting. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3148, Arlington, VA 22203, Office 703-486-1010

Write the [Governor](#), Mailing Address: Office of the Governor, P.O. Box 1475, Richmond, VA 23218

Joint Subcommittee to Study Mental Health Services in the Commonwealth in the 21st

Century. Meetings - dates, time and location. Attend a meeting in Richmond, every meeting has a public comment at the end. State your advocacy concern, and ask for help. Write the Committee Members:

House Members

The Honorable Robert B. Bell, Vice Chair, DelRBell@house.virginia.gov

The Honorable T. Scott Garrett, Member of House Appropriations Committee, DelSGarrett@house.virginia.gov

The Honorable Margaret B. Ransone, delmransone@house.virginia.gov

The Honorable Vivian E. Watts, DelVWatts@house.virginia.gov

The Honorable Patrick A. Hope, Member, House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions, DelPHope@house.virginia.gov

The Honorable L. Nick Rush, Member of House Appropriations Committee, DelNRRush@house.virginia.gov

The Honorable Lashrece D. Aird, Member of House Appropriations Committee, DelLAird@house.virginia.gov

Senate Members:

The Honorable R. Creigh Deeds, Chair, district25@senate.virginia.gov

The Honorable Janet D. Howell, Member, Senate Finance Committee, district32@senate.virginia.gov

The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger Jr., Member, Senate Finance Committee, district_24@senate.virginia.gov

The Honorable George L. Barker, Member, Senate Committee on Education and Health, senatorbarker@gmail.com

The Honorable John A. Cosgrove Jr., Member, Senate Committee on Education and Health, district14@senate.virginia.gov

Staff Contact:

Sarah Stanton, Thomas Stevens and Charles Quagliato, Division of Legislative Services, (804) 698-1810

Chad Starzer, Senate Committee Operations, cstarzer@senate.virginia.gov