Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services
Virtual Meeting

June 18, 2025

Attending: Don Carey (Chair), DeRonda Short (Vice Chair), Sheryl Garland, William Boone, Zulma Santos, Matthew Melvin, Maria Benjamin, Les Ford, Coke Stewart, Sarah Owen, and April Morefield

Also in Attendance: Kevin Erskine (Chief Deputy Commissioner) and Ellen Fulmer (Assistant Attorney General)

Meeting called to order at 10:03am – Mr. Carey

Comments from the Commissioner – Chief Deputy Commissioner Kevin Erskine provided an overview of current agency priorities.

Ms. Garland noted the pending federal legislation and asked if the agency is developing a contingency plan in the event Medicaid eligibility reviews must be increased from once to twice annually. She asked if the agency is prepared for the resulting increased workload. Angela Morse, Director of the Division of Benefit Programs, will follow up.

Mr. Boone asked if the agency has assessed the impact of pending federal legislation on low-income families in Virginia. Mr. Erskine and Ms. Morse responded the pending legislation is still in process and no final details are known. However, preliminary analysis shows approximately eighty-eight thousand current clients will be impacted by the change in work requirements.

Ms. Ford would like a walk-through of opportunities for clients to meet the work requirement, outside of paid employment. In addition, she asked if outcome measures would be expanded to track SNAP recipients who are subject to the work requirement, if they must leave the program.

Ms. Garland stated the Board needs a better understanding of overall resource needs that will result from new federal requirements, in advance of the 2026 General Assembly session, both at the state and local levels.

COMMENT PERIOD

Judy Hackler – Ms. Hackler, Executive Director for Virginia Assisted Living Association, provided comments regarding the liability insurance regulations. A handout was shared with the Board.

Chidimma Delila Uwasomba – Ms. Uwasomba shared her concerns about her children in foster care.

There were no comments from boards and directors of community action agencies.

Comment from the Virginia League of Social Service Executives – Kimberly Ayers, Chair, Child and Family Services Committee and Director, Wythe DSS. Ms. Ayers shared they are approaching a full year of implementation of the parental child and safety placement program. They are partnering with Eric

Reynolds, Children's Ombudsman and VDSS to begin regional listening sessions to discuss the parental child safety place. They are diligently working on increasing kinship placements both within the parental child safety placement program space and informal foster care realm. The League is very thankful for the VDSS advocacy, the General Assembly and Governor advocacy for increasing the funding for additional positions for Child Protective Services. They are closely monitoring the federal reconciliation budget bill and preparing for potential impact to client services and locality budgets. The League is also closely monitoring the impact of the EBT fraud scandals and working with VDSS on solutions. They are excited to be involved with Secretary Kelly in the Governor's new task force, Safe Kids, Strong Families. The League's next board meeting is in July in Winchester, VA.

Division of Licensing Programs Overview of Compliance Process – Tara Ragland provided an overview of the compliance process.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **April 2025 Meeting Minutes**
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Sheryl Garland), second (Maria Benjamin), motion approved with all in favor.

2. **22VAC40-73 Standards for Licensed Assisted Living Facilities – Proposed Regulation**
   Minimum Liability Insurance
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Les Ford), second (Matthew Melvin), motion approved with all in favor.

   Regarding assisted living facilities and the requirement for liability insurance, Ms. Short noted General Assembly action might be needed to ensure residents are protected. Ms. Garland reminded members the ALF Liability Insurance Committee recommended the agency monitor implementation of the emergency and final regulations and provide periodic updates to the Board, with the option of revisiting the initial legislation with the Commissioner and patron.

3. **22VAC40-325, Fraud Elimination/Reduction Effort – Proposed Regulation**
   The agency is still working with the Office of Attorney General on this regulation; therefore, it is not ready for action.

4. **Amendments to Bylaws**
   On Motion Duly Made**,** (Maria Benjamine), second (Matthew Melvin), motion approved with all in favor.

5. **Report from Nominating Committee & Election of New Officers**
   The Nominating Committee (Maria Benjamin and Les Ford) recommended Don Carey as Chair, DeRonda Short as Vice-Chair, and Sheryl Garland as Secretary.
   On Motion Duly Made, (Maria Benjamin), second (Matthew Melvin), motion approved with all in favor.

Kinship Implementation Update/Safe Kids, Strong Families Initiative – Carl Ayers provided an update on Kinship Implementation and Safe Kids, Strong Families Initiative. He will ensure members are invited to upcoming listening sessions.

Mr. Boone observed: 1) the state is not adequately funding local department staffing levels and 2) the current funding formula hurts low-income localities. He feels more advocacy is needed on behalf of the agency to increase resources and he hoped Board would be part of that moving forward.

Recognize Outgoing Member Buckey Boone – Mr. Carey thanked Mr. Boone for his service. He shared it has been a pleasure getting to know Mr. Boone and wished him the very best. Mr. Carey opened the meeting for board members and VDSS staff to share their remarks for Mr. Boone.

Board Member Comments – Mr. Carey noted the August meeting will be held in Tazwell and hosted by Tazewell DSS. He encouraged members to attend the meeting in person.

Meeting adjourned at 12:20pm