

**Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia
Board of Directors Meeting
April 22, 2024**

Members Present

Ana Alvarez
Michael Carrasco
Patricia Deitos, RN
Tom Fonseca
Michelle Kimmel
Pamela Kincheloe, RN, Chairperson
Sally Patterson
Patrice Lepczyk
Anitha Raj
Robert Sharpe
John Smith III, MD
Jennifer Weber
John Whyte, MD

Staff Present

Ann McFeeley
Dean Montgomery

Guests (Partial List)

Robert Carolla, Arlington County CSB, NAMI
Wendy Crawford, Arlington County CSB
Melody Dickerson, RN, Chief Nursing Officer, VHC Health
Paul Dryer, Inova Health System
Steven Gallagher, Arlington County CSB
Ruth Gates, Inova Health System
Mary Anne Harkins, Harkins Consulting
Jennifer Ligon, Williams Mullen
Jamie Martin, Williams Mullen, Counsel, VHC Health
Oliver Russell, Arlington County DHS
Lizabeth Schuch, Wellness & Recovery Manager, Behavioral Healthcare, Arlington County DHS
Adrian Stanton, Vice President, VHC Health
Deborah Warren, Arlington Community Services Board

I. Call to Order

Pamela Kincheloe, RN, Chairperson, Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia (HSANV), called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. She welcomed those present and reviewed the agenda.

Kincheloe stated that, among other matters, the board would consider a certificate of public need (COPN) application from VHC Health to establish a 146-bed specialty hospital in Arlington County (COPN Request VA-8744). She invited those who wished to speak on the application to sign the speaker signup sheet.

II. Previous Minutes

Minutes of the March 11, 2024, meeting was approved as corrected.

III. Conflict of Interest

Kincheloe exercised HSANV conflict of interest procedures to determine whether any member of the board had a conflict of interest on the VHC Health application. No conflicts were declared, alleged, or otherwise identified.

IV. VHC Health, Establish Specialty Hospital (COPN Request VA-8744)

VHC Health Presentation

Adrian Stanton, Vice President, VHC Health, Melody Dickerson, RN, Chief Nursing Officer, VHC Health, and Jamie Martin, Counsel, VHC Health, introduced themselves and discussed key aspects and elements of the proposal. Their talking points, and the information presented, are appended (Attachments 1 & 2).

Stanton and Dickerson discussed the status and recent history of mental health and rehabilitation services at VHC. Among other considerations, they emphasized:

- Substantial additional capacity is required to meet current and projected demand for inpatient psychiatric and medical rehabilitation services. Beyond the clinical and management problems inherent in operating at near capacity much of the time, between 500 and 600 prospective psychiatric patients are referred elsewhere annually because a bed is not available when needed.
- A smaller but significant number of medical rehabilitation patients, between 50 and 75 annually, also must be redirected to other services because of bed unavailability.
- To obtain needed care, many of the mental health patients not admitted travel to distant hospitals outside the planning region.
- The Virginia Hospital Center campus is densely developed. Adding more than a few beds would be unusually difficult and unnecessarily costly. The alternative of developing an appropriately sized facility at the proposed nearby site (former Northern Virginia Community Hospital campus) is the preferred, practical alternative. The site is in the heart of the VHC Health primary service area.
- The proposal, and the size and nature of the project, is a cooperative effort. It has been developed in consultation with a diverse group of local stakeholders, including local health department and local community services board representatives.

- Recent VHC psychiatric and medical rehabilitation service volumes exceed Virginia State Medical Facilities Plan (SMFP) target occupancy levels qualifying the project for consideration under the institutional need provision of the plan.
- Projected capital costs are reasonable, within the range seen for similar projects locally and elsewhere.
- The project is consistent with the applicable bed need provisions of the Virginia SMFP, as they have been applied to similar projects locally and statewide.

Board & Staff Questions, Discussion

In response to questions Stanton, Dickerson, Martin, and other VHC representatives indicated that:

- The numbers of psychiatric and rehabilitation beds requested are VCH Health’s best estimate of the capacity needed to be fully responsive to expressed demand at Virginia Hospital Center and to permit efficient operations at the new facility, the Wellness Hospital.
- Given its size and focus, the project may be categorized as a proposal to establish a new hospital rather than an offsite replacement and expansion project as suggested in the application.
- VHC Health is in talks with a national provider of mental health services to become a partner in the venture. VHC Health will hold a majority interest, the new owner/operator a minority interest.
- With the additional capacity requested, VHC Health hopes to serve many of those forced to travel to distant facilities outside of PD 8 for psychiatric care, but would not seek to become the regional treatment center of last resort.
- The project assumes no appreciable change in the number of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan patients, many from eastern Prince William County where there is no local inpatient psychiatric or medical rehabilitation service, it is likely to serve during the next decade.
- Given the high and increasing use of inpatient psychiatric and medical rehabilitation services regionwide, adding the capacity requested to the regional bed complement should not affect significantly demand at and use of competing PD 8 services.

Public Comment

Four representatives of local mental health service interest groups spoke in support of the application: Deborah Warren, Executive Director, Arlington County Community Services Board (CSB), Wendy Crawford, Chairperson, Arlington County CSB, Steven Gallagher, Arlington County CSB Mental Health Stakeholders Group, and Lizabeth Schuch, Wellness & Recovery Manager, Behavioral Healthcare, Arlington County DHS.

All stressed the importance and benefits of serving locally those needing mental health care as quickly as possible, and the necessity of a sizable increase in mental health beds to respond promptly and effectively to local needs. Their comments are appended (Attachments 3, 4, 5 & 6).

Applicant Summary

Adrian Stanton stated that VHC Health would forego additional. He thanked the board for its consideration of the proposal and offered to answer any additional questions members might have.

Staff Assessment and Recommendation

Dean Montgomery discussed agency staff perspective on the application, stressing the belief that the proposal is properly categorized as a new hospital project rather than an offsite expansion and relocation project. There is no analytical methodology or algorithm that suggests the number of beds requested by VHC Health is the correct or best estimate of likely need over the next five to six years. It is, nevertheless, a reasonable estimate given the evident need for more capacity than the standard Virginia SMFP algorithm suggests is required. In addition, it also represents an opportunity to reduce the migration of northern Virginia residents to distant hospitals outside the planning region and the value of a facility sized to permit more efficient operations.

Based on the information presented in the staff report on the application, on the information and argument presented by VHC Health representatives, and on the testimony of community representatives offering personal and organization perspectives on the proposal, Montgomery recommended that the board recommend approval of the application.

Board Deliberation and Vote

Tom Fonseca offered a motion to recommend approval of the application as submitted. Sally Patterson seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of thirteen in favor (Alvarez, Carrasco, Deitos, Fonseca, Kimmel, Kincheloe, Lepczyk, Patterson, Raj, Sharpe, Smith, Weber, Whyte) and none opposed.

V. Other Business

The next meeting of the HSANV board will be May 6, 2024.

VI. Adjourn

Kincheloe adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Dean Montgomery

Attachments (6)