

Agenda

Partnership for Access To Healthcare (PATH)

April 25, 2025

11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

LewisGale Hospital Montgomery

First Floor Classroom

Present

Anna Champion
Ahsley Hash
Bernard Kadio
Beth O'Connor
Cayla Trueheart
Donna Sedgwick
Fallon Bursey
Harvey Barker
Jess Wirgau
Jessica Nicholson

Jim Werth
Kassie Couch
Katelyn Melton
Kathleen Porter
Kelvin Gravely Jr.
Kinsey Weaver
Mary Jimenez
Maureen Shinault
Molly Roberts
Noelle Bissell

Pam Ray
Rebecca Lord
Rhonda Seltz
Sarah Frazier
Sophie Wenzel
Susan Dalrymple
Susannah Marley
Trina Porterfield-Pifer
Vickie Collins
Wendy Welch

PATH Meeting

Maureen Shinault, PHN, New River Health District and Mary Jimenez, Pulaski County DSS—

Discussion regarding long-term care service issues across the NRV

Maureen spoke about in-home community-based screenings and the aim of keeping individuals in their homes and out of nursing facilities, with the primary benefit being paid caregivers. The program is designed for individuals whose eligibility is based on the following: the degree of support needed to perform activities of daily living, whether the individual has ongoing medical or nursing need, and if they are 'at risk' of being admitted to a nursing facility or hospitalized within the next 30 days in the absence of the provision of services and supports.

She explained how caregivers can be obtained through an agency or by using a facilitating agency to pay a family member or friend, with a standard wage of \$13.60 per hour (the wage is almost double in northern Virginia), which has become a hindrance to service. In 2024, Maureen conducted 450 screenings across the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski and the city of Radford, with over 40% being rescreens. She explained that screenings are valid for life, but without services, they become invalid after a year.

Maureen shared that family members, spouses, and parents of minor children are eligible to be paid as caregivers, which is not widely known and how clients have 30 days to select an MCO (Managed Care Organizations) as well as the right to switch. She indicated that MCOs provide care coordinators who are legally required to check in with clients every 30 days. She continued explaining the intricacies of the process including the complex screening criteria, the distinction between skilled nursing care and other forms of assistance such as medication handling, and the recent change to acknowledging autism as a criterion that establishes need.

She spoke about the challenges in getting people to apply to caregiving agencies, liability issues for caregivers, and how the highest-risk individuals are those who do not see doctors regularly. She also

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informed the group that Virginia is a recovery state, meaning any assets from clients who pass away could be reclaimed by the state. While the program aims to keep people at home with adequate support, significant gaps remain, especially in follow-up services, caregiver recruitment, and ensuring clients are effectively supported through the process.

Michelle Brauns, Community Health Center and Rhonda Setz, Virginia Poverty Law Center—Dental crisis update

Rhonda shared a follow-up from the Dental Crisis Forum that took place on August 29, 2024. Since then, she has developed a white paper with a history of issues at the micro (families/personal) level, the meso (ambassadors) level, and the macro (legislative) levels impacting rural communities.

She reiterated that there are fewer than 29 dental providers per 100,000 people, and that even if every dentist accepted Medicaid, it wouldn't be enough to address the need. The issue is so large that strategies must be broken down into smaller, more focused actions. Community Action recently received a grant to collect data and advocate for parents and children to get dental care, particularly through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). They're also working on addressing transportation issues and reducing no-shows by partnering with local organizations to provide movement and hope for better access to care.

At the meso-level, efforts include working with DentiQuest to recruit more dentists to accept Medicaid, tackling transportation barriers, and addressing missed appointments. DentiQuest has a grant cycle coming up in August, which if awarded locally, could fund a dental manager to oversee the project and plan events like a Mission of Mercy clinic. Michelle is leading a legislative and funding committee focused on advocacy at the macro level, potentially working on building a dental clinic and/or school.

VCOM students are currently researching the economic impact of the lack of dental care, particularly for people in recovery who often lack teeth and struggle to find employment. There's also a push to explore paying dental therapists in Virginia, which would help address the shortage at a macro level. The state's Medicaid coverage is strong, but the lack of dental providers remains a significant barrier.

Donna Sedgwick, Ph. D., Department of Sociology, Virginia Tech—Network analysis introduction and update

Jess Wirgau with Community Foundation gave a brief overview of Healthy Roots and the coordination across networks. She spoke about the benefits of the network analysis for Thrive and First Steps.

Donna Sedgwick works alongside Robin Lemire (based in Louisiana) to conduct a network analysis of PATH. The goal is to survey health services organization in the NRV to identify collaborative leverage points and orient around priority areas identified from Carilion's recent Community Health Assessment (CHA).

Robin has been meeting with networks to survey health services organizations in the NRV to identify collaborative leverage points and align efforts around priority areas identified in Carilion's recent Community Health Assessment (CHA). The survey includes sections on relationships between organizations, mapping services by priority areas, and collaborative interest.

Key questions posed include whether the study's aim aligns with PATH, if the listed priority areas are appropriate, and whether this analysis will provide a snapshot of the current situation or be valuable for

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long-term planning. The group discussed the current issues highlighted from the CHA to determine which to focus on during the network analysis.

PATHways Sharing

Ashley Hash with Carilion announced the implementation strategies in response to the 2024 CHA has been [shared online](#).

Fallon Bursey with Volunteer Montgomery is a volunteer coordinator and offered her support to any programs and local organizations who may need extra support.

Molly Roberts shared that the Carilion cardiovascular unit will be offering free AED training at the Christiansburg Rec Center. If 35 participants attend from a single organization, they will receive a free AED machine. She added that there will be a health fair event, so those interested in participating will need to reach out to her or Ashley Hash. She also mentioned that both the Giles and New River hospitals have community health workers who provide free 1-on-1 meetings with clients to assist with goal setting and providing psycho-social support.

Noelle Bissell mentioned the issue of the unhoused populations across the NRV and how their living situations effects other areas of their lives including health, job security, and food access (among others). She voiced the need for supportive housing with community and political support.

Beth O'Connor mentioned the Rural Health Voice Annual Conference will be held at the Wintergreen Resort, November 19-20. For more information and to apply to be a breakout session leaders, visit: vrha.org/conference/.

Next PATH Meeting: TBD

Any questions, comments, or suggestions for future meetings should be directed to: rebecca.lord@vdh.virginia.gov

THANK YOU

LewisGale Hospital Montgomery for hosting us and providing lunch!

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