



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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COMMISSIONER

DEPARTMENT OF
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April 1, 2020

TO: Members of the VHHA Virginia Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (VDMAC)

FROM: Alison G. Land, FACHE, Commissioner, DBHDS

M. Norman Oliver, MD, Commissioner, VDH

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M. Norman Oliver, MD

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SUBJECT: Guidance for State Psychiatric Hospital and Community Hospital COVID-19 Transfer and Admissions

Thank you for writing concerning developing guidance on procedures for transfer and admission of patients at community hospitals and state psychiatric hospitals operated by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The need for a unified, agreed upon response is critical for the health, safety and wellbeing of Virginians in state-operated psychiatric hospitals as we move forward in these unprecedented times. As such, DBHDS and the Virginia Department of Health agree with the VDMAC draft for number one below, and offer alternative language for number two as follows:

1. Community hospitals will continue to follow their internal policies and procedures for treatment of psychiatric patients, which include screening patients who present to the emergency department for COVID-19, assessing their behavioral and medical needs, and admitting as appropriate patients who are under investigation, presumed positive, or confirmed positive of COVID-19.
2. State psychiatric hospitals will not transfer to community hospitals patients who, during the provision of care at the facility were exposed to COVID-19 and do not require hospitalization for symptoms and will treat and quarantine them as appropriate within the facility. Patients who are in the care of a State Psychiatric Facility who are presumptive positive, confirmed positive, or through consultation with the health department have a high suspicion for COVID-19 based on the patient's history and symptoms will be

referred for evaluation and treatment at a community hospital. Upon completion of COVID-19 treatment at the community hospital, the patient shall be transferred back to the State Psychiatric Hospital from which the patient was transferred and re-admitted for continuation of medically necessary psychiatric care.

Thank you very much for your proactive approach to this matter. We are grateful for your partnership as we work together for the health and safety of all Virginians.