

**Virginia Brain Injury Council
IN-PERSON MEETING
April 23, 2025
12:30 – 3:30 p.m.**

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
Conference Rooms 101, 103 and 105
8004 Franklin Farms Drive
Henrico, Virginia 23229

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kara Keuthan, Chair
Maria Altonen
Ann Bevan
Gayl Brunk
Kristen Galles (Virtual, Distance Reason)
Rebecca Herbig
Amol Karmarkar
Kelly Lang (Virtual, Caregiving Reason)
Amy Loving
Martha Montgomery
Susan Moon
Steven Nape (Virtual, Medical/Disability Reason)
Derek O’Neal (Virtual, Distance Reason)
Dan Reeves
Erika Sisson
Maria Stransky
Amber Walter
Jason Young
Justine Young

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joani Latimer
Teri Morgan

STAFF PRESENT:

Donna Cantrell, DARS, Staff to Council
Marcia DuBois, DARS, Deputy Commissioner, Division for Community Living
Joyce McKune

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GUESTS and PUBLIC:

Cara Meixner (virtual)
Cynthia O'Donoghue (virtual)
Kathy Stumm (virtual)
Anne McDonnell
Susan Baxter

Welcome and Introductions

Kara Keuthan, Chair, was running late. In the absence of a vice chair, Council Staff, Donna Cantrell, called the meeting to order at 12:33 p.m. She asked members to introduce themselves and verified that a quorum was physically present.

Donna Cantrell asked voting members who were present in the room if they had any objections to the full participation of members attending virtually. There were no objections; all members present, in person and virtually, were permitted to participate in Council business.

Donna Cantrell invited Marcia DuBois to introduce Amy Loving to Council. Amy Loving is the newly hired Director of Brain Injury Services. Marcia DuBois described her background and experience and welcomed her to the meeting.

Review Proposed Agenda

Donna Cantrell drew members' attention to the Proposed Agenda and asked if there were any changes. Ann Bevan noted that one change needed to be made regarding the date of the next quarterly meeting: July 22 needed to be amended to July 23. Members were asked for a motion to approve the proposed Agenda with the amendment. Maria Altonen motioned that the Agenda be accepted with the change; Amber Walter seconded. All members voted to approve the motion.

Review January DRAFT Minutes

Donna Cantrell asked if members had any changes to the draft Minutes from the January 22, 2025, Quarterly Meeting. Kristen Galles noted 3 minor changes to the second paragraph on page 8. Jason Young made the motion that the minutes be accepted with those changes; Rebecca Herbig seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion was approved.

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Public Comment Period

Kara Keuthan, Chair, introduced herself to the Council and asked if there was anyone present who wanted to give public comment. Kara Keuthan noted there was one individual attending virtually who wanted to give public comment. Kathy Stumm was invited to address the Council.

Kathy Stumm made 4 points:

- She requested that the Council consider moving public comment to the end of the meeting in future agendas.
- She disagrees with the January minutes, which state that the Administration for Community Living (ACL) advised that members should be residents of the State of Virginia. She requested that the Council request to see the actual language that was provided via email from ACL Project Officer, Elizabeth Leef, to the Director of Disability Services, Carolyn Turner.
- She mentioned that she reviewed the draft Priorities Letter and was concerned that housing was not included. Over the past year, the Council's Housing Workgroup has done much work and written a report that warrants further consideration.
- She advocated for the Council to consider her application for appointment to the Council as a special circumstance, based on her extensive experience working within the system in Virginia.

Kara Keuthan thanked Kathy Stumm for her public comment.

Agency/Division Update

Marcia DuBois provided a few agency updates regarding DARS:

- Dr. Valencia McGee was recently hired as the new Director of No Wrong Door. She noted that DARS' federal grant has a project with No Wrong Door.
- Ms. DuBois acknowledged that there had been some changes at the Federal level. She discussed Health and Human Services (HHS) workforce reductions and restructuring, noting that critical programs for individuals who are aging or who have disabilities will be integrated into other departments within HHS. At this time, it appears that programs relevant to the Council would be integrated into the Administration for Children and Families.
- Related to the Federal budget, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution that provides funding through September 2025. She provided more details on the budget process and potential funding cuts. Marcia DuBois provided updates on the status of the federal and state budgets. On the federal level, Congress is in recess until

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April 28. House Committees may be expected to submit their proposals by May 9. On the state level, Governor Youngkin has until May 2 to decide if he will sign the budget or use his line-item veto. In addition, a General Assembly committee has been established to monitor and explore the impact of changes at the Federal level.

- Marcia DuBois also reminded the Council about their roles and responsibilities around advocacy. Members of the Council are encouraged to focus on education and raising awareness of brain injury. If you speak on a specific bill or budget item, you should do that as a private citizen and not on behalf of the Council. The Brain Injury Association of Virginia and the Virginia Alliance of Brain Injury Services Providers are other advocacy-related organizations that are available.
- DARS Websites are all being updated over the next 6 months, so you may notice some changes.
- Finally, the DARS office is moving. Sometime in the late summer, DARS will be moving to an office on Cox Rd. This will be the last time that the Virginia Brain Injury Council meets in this location. Donna Cantrell will provide further details as they become available.

Brain Injury Services Update

Amy Loving gave a brief update, noting that as she is very new to the position, her priority at the moment is becoming familiar with the community, meeting all of her partners and becoming more familiar with their programs, services, and needs.

Alliance of Brain Injury Services Providers

Jason Young provided an update on Alliance activities, advocacy, and legislative actions. He noted that there is no budget at this time, but he was hopeful that the General Assembly's final budget amendments, noted above, would be adopted in the final budget.

He also noted that, while not specific to the state-funded programs, there was money allocated for a 20-bed neurobehavioral unit that would be managed by the Department of Medical Assistance Services. This has long been a priority in the brain injury community and the Council. The Governor vetoed this item; the General Assembly reinstated it. This item is pending final budget approval.

Jason Young noted that the Alliance is monitoring actions at the federal level; of particular concern are potential changes to Medicaid, which would have a big impact on the individuals that state-funded providers serve. The Alliance is considering ways it may be able to reduce the impact.

The council took a short break.

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Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV) Annual Report on Disability Related to Brain Injury

Dan Reeves provided a presentation describing the prevalence of disability related to brain injury in Virginia.

Semi-Annual Federal Grant Update

Donna Cantrell provided a brief update on the status of the Federal grant goals and next steps. She invited Cara Meixner and Cindy O'Donohue, subcontractors from James Madison University to share information related to the development of the next Needs and Resources Assessment that will be used to inform the next Virginia State Plan for Brain Injury in Virginia.

Council took a short break.

Committee Reports and Updates

Kara Keuthan invited the Chairs of Council subcommittees to provide brief updates on their work during the past quarter.

Priorities Committee Update

Jason Young presented the proposed Priorities Letter from Council to the Commissioner of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. He began by thanking Committee members and noted that they examined letters from recent years, last year's priorities survey, and comments from Council members. After much discussion, the Committee focused on 2 primary areas:

- 1. Continued expansion and strengthening of the Commonwealth's statewide network of community-based brain injury services**
- 2. Increased access and funding for Neurobehavioral Services for people living with brain injury.**

Kelly Lang asked Priorities Committee members if they had considered housing as an issue that should be included in this letter. There was discussion about where things were left after the housing report was completed, and an update was provided on the recommendation regarding the consultant that was reported on last summer. It was recognized that housing is a critical issue and suggested that the Council may choose to

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bring some of the housing recommendations from the housing report back into the discussion or introduce new items at a later date.

Kristen Galles stated that she had provided feedback to the Priorities Committee asking that issues that impact people with mild brain injury, such as cognitive rehab and mental health services, receive greater priority. She also stated that the letter sounded like it was written by DARS to DARS, complimenting itself.

Gayl Brunk noted that it was important to recall who this letter is addressed to and who it is from. It is to the Commissioner and from the Council, and certainly does not encompass all of the Council's priorities or all of the things the Council can explore. Gayl Brunk made the motion to approve the Priorities Letter as written, and Steven Nape seconded. After a vote, Kristen Galles opposed the Motion, and all other members present approved it. The motion passed.

Donna Cantrell will prepare the final letter for Kara Keuthan's signature to submit to the DARS Commissioner. Council members will be provided a copy of the final document.

Nominating Committee Update

Steven Nape thanked his committee and briefly described the process they went through, including application redesign, development of outreach and marketing materials, and the application evaluation process. He explained that staff received 9 applications for review, and that because of time constraints, the committee was only able to recommend 2 individuals for appointment. Those recommendations are being submitted to the Commissioner of DARS, and we are awaiting her action. The remaining 7 applications are still being reviewed.

Since the committee last met, 2 additional applications have been received. Those applications will be available to the nominating committee members during the next committee meeting.

Steven also noted that the Council is still accepting applications; members are encouraged to continue to share this opportunity with their communities.

Appoint New Nominating Committee

Kara Keuthan noted that a new Nominating Committee needs to be appointed every April, according to the bylaws finalized in October 2024. She proposed that Steven Nape and Kelly Lang be appointed to the new committee, since both of those members had

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previously served on this committee. She then asked if there was one other voting member who would be interested in serving on this committee. Justine Young volunteered.

During the next Committee meeting, the first task will be to prepare a Slate of Council Officers that can be voted on during the July meeting. Other activities will include continuing to market the opportunity to apply for membership, reviewing applicants, and proposing Council Nominees for the Commissioner's potential appointment.

Kara asked for a motion to approve the newly appointed nominating committee members, Steven Nape, Kelly Lang, and Justine Young. Amber Walter made the motion; Derek O'Neal seconded. The Motion was approved unanimously.

Funds Dissemination Committee Update

Derek O'Neal reminded Council that the General Assembly passed 2 budget items: \$750,000 to expand brain injury services and \$600,000 for workforce retention. The Governor vetoed the \$750,000 and reduced the \$600,000 by 50%. The General Assembly then reinstated their original budget actions, and the Governor has until the first week of May to take action on these line items.

He reviewed the funding recommendations from the Brain Injury Association of Virginia and the Virginia Alliance of Brain Injury Services Providers. Dan Reeves noted that should the final budget allocate some other variation on these amounts, the Committee may need to come together again to reassess those recommendations.

Kara asked for a Motion to approve the Funds Dissemination recommendation letter proposed by the Committee. Justine Young made the Motion, and Amber Walter seconded. Jason Young and Dan Reeves abstained from voting. All other members approved the recommendations. Donna will finalize the letter and provide it to Kara Keuthan to sign and submit to the DARS Commissioner.

New Business

Kara Keuthan asked if members had any new business they wished to discuss. Jason Young asked for clarification on the Nominating Committee's actions. Donna Cantrell explained that the Committee was recommending 2 applicants for appointment. Based on the new Bylaws, the Committee has the responsibility of reviewing applications and submitting its recommendations for appointment directly to the Commissioner.

Kristen Galles asked how many more survivors needed to be appointed for us to meet the goal of 50%. Donna Cantrell noted that in total, 14 members needed to be individuals with

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lived experience of brain injury. Currently, the Council has 5 members who meet this qualification, and if the 2 additional members are appointed, that will bring it to 7, which is 50% of the requirement.

Gayl Brunk asked if the Committee would be nominating a Vice Chair and other officer positions. Donna Cantrell confirmed that the Nominating Committee would be preparing a Slate of Officers to be voted on by Council members at the July meeting.

Derek O’Neal asked for clarification of the status of his position once he moves to Baltimore, Maryland, on July 1st. Amy Loving noted that DARS would get back to him on the status of his position.

Adjourn

Kara Keuthan asked for a Motion to adjourn the meeting. Gayl Brunk made the motion and Dan Reeves seconded. The April Quarterly meeting adjourned at 3:24 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, July 23, 2025 from 12:30 p.m. thru 3:30 p.m.

This may be a virtual event.

MEETING LOGISTICS

MEETING MATERIALS:

For meeting materials, please visit: <https://www.vadars.org/vbic.htm#currentmeeting>