COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

NELSON SMITH
COMMISSIONER

DEPARTMENT OF
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
Post Office Box 1797
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1797

Telephone (804) 786-3921
Fax (804) 371-6638
www.dbhds.virginia.gov

M E M O R A N D U M

To: CSB Executive Directors, Children's Services Program Staff and Chief Financial Officer

Re: Budget Language Amendment change: Children's Mental Health Initiative Funding

Date: April 7th, 2022

Dear CSB Executive Directors, Children's Program Manager and Chief Financial Officers,

During the 2022 General Assembly, a language only budget amendment was approved for the Mental Health Initiative funds. The Mental Health Initiative funding was first appropriated by the General Assembly in FY 2000 to address funding gaps in the community-based system. Specifically, it is a dedicated source of funding for mental health and substance abuse services for children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances (SED[i]) who are not mandated for the Children's Services Act (CSA). The change to the budget language allows for an increase in flexibility for children's services and assists the community services boards (CSB) in the most appropriate local planning needs for these funds while allowing more flexibility to include other at-risk populations beyond SED.

The current goals of the Commonwealth are to prevent unnecessary out-of-home placements including psychiatric hospitalizations and efforts across state agencies serving children have been moving in this direction. The language change allows for more upstream funding to intervene, including providing services to children and youth who are at-risk of SED, to prevent costly and detrimental hospitalizations when other options could be explored and reduce burdens on both the CSBs and local Family Assessment Planning Teams (FAPTS) . The new language requires a streamlined agreement between the CSBs and their local Community Policy and Management Teams (CPMT) on the use of these funds.

The new language is as follows:

> *313 I. Out of this appropriation $6,148,128 the first year and $6,148,128 the second year from the general fund shall be provided for mental health services for children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances, at risk for serious emotional disturbance, and/or with co-occurring disorders with priority placed on those children who, absent services, are at-risk for*

removal from the home due to placement by a local department of social services, admission to a congregate care facility or acute care psychiatric hospital or crisis stabilization facility, commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice, or parental custody relinquishment. These funds shall be used exclusively for children and adolescents, not mandated for services under the Children's Services Act. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services shall provide these funds to Community Services Boards through the annual Performance Contract. The Community Services Boards shall develop a Mental Health Initiative funding plan in collaboration with the local Family and Assessment Planning Teams and/or Community Policy and Management Team. The funding plan shall be approved by the Community Policy and Management Teams of the localities. The department shall provide these funds to the Community Services Boards based on a funding methodology.

If you have any questions about this memo, please contact Katharine Hunter at katharine.hunter@dbhds.virginia.gov or 804-807-0953 (work cell).

Regards,

Nina Marino, MSW, LCSW

Director, Office of Child and Family Services

Cc:

Lisa Jobe-Shields

Katharine Hunter

Nathan Miles

Rachel Brown

Eric Billings

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[i] Serious emotional disturbance as defined by the Substance Abuse and State Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) as a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder in the past year, which resulted in functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits the child's role or functioning in family, school, or community activities.