



2019 - 2020 Annual Report

To educate, empower, and advocate to improve the mental health of all Virginians



2008 Bremono Road, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23226
Phone: 804-257-5591
866-400-MHAV
Fax: 804-447-7786
mhav.org

Federal Tax ID # 54-0534103
CFC # 97281
CVC # 6048

A year like no other...

A majority of Virginians are dealing with degrees of anxiety or fear we never expected. Thanks to our dedicated staff, partners and supporters, we responded to the pandemic's mental health toll by boosting our state wide Warm Line and finding new ways to serve more people.

A few highlights:

- Increased peer staffing on the Warm Line to handle more calls for support
- Added texting and Spanish language capacity
- Developed a disaster response Warm Line for covid-19 concerns
- Adapted in-person recovery education to free webinars
- Created a podcast series for Peer Recovery Specialists
- Increased social media to feature self-care resources, racial justice and advocacy opportunities

As the pandemic recedes there will be more mental health challenges. Building on this year's work and partnerships, we will continue advocating for mental health and supporting resiliency for all Virginians.

Policy and Advocacy

2020 Policy Priorities:

- Increase access to community based mental health care
- Address the needs of individuals with mental illness in the criminal justice system
- Expand opportunities for Certified Peer Recovery Specialists
- Endorse effective strategies for reducing suicide



- Mental Health Advocacy Day (with our advocacy partner organizations)
- Helped obtain the largest increase in mental health funding in years
- Tracked state legislation and budget process; posted weekly updates on website
- Public comment supporting: full funding for public mental health services, teacher education and school support for youth mental health, diversion from the criminal justice system, Marcus Alert crisis response
- Participated on state legislative study committees:
 - TDO Crisis Evaluation Process
 - Hospital Crisis Bed Registry System
 - Crisis Intervention Team Assessment Centers
 - Children's Residential Placement Barriers
 - Mandatory Outpatient Treatment
- Monitored the Board of Local and Regional Jails for mental health standards and death investigation reports
- Posted advocacy blogs on mental health and racial justice, covid-19, student health and other issues
- Publicized MHA's "The State of Mental Health in America 2020"

Virginia's Peer-Run Warm Line

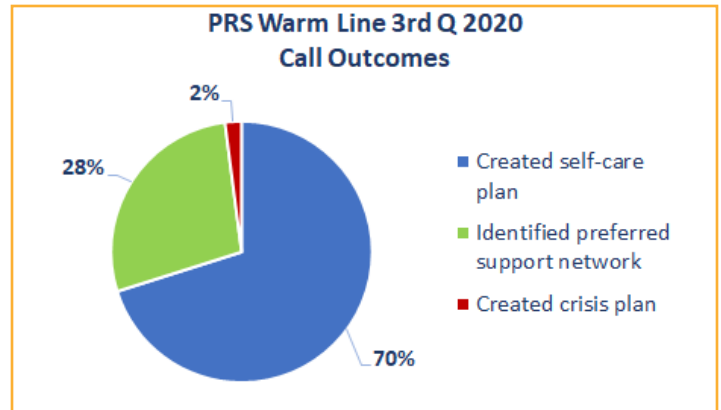
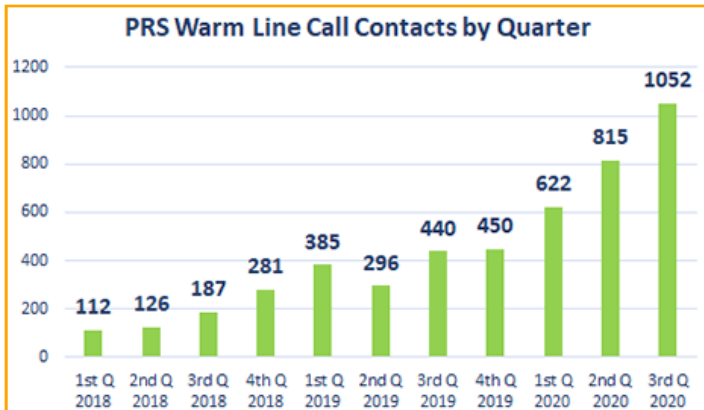
Texting and Spanish added to MHAV'S Peer Warm Line

Telephone peer support is vital during times of severe stress. We responded to the 140% increase in calls to our Warm Line with a new call management system that supports texting and teamwork. Emergency funding increased staffing and added Spanish language capacity. Free and confidential, the Warm Line is for anyone in Virginia wanting non-crisis support, information, hope or encouragement.

866-400-6428

9 AM to 9 PM Mon-Fri

5 PM to 9 PM Sat-Sun



New COVID-19 Disaster Response Warm Line!

In June 2020 MHAV helped Virginia initiate mental health support related to the pandemic. We started a second Warm Line to support anyone struggling with trauma, grief and distress caused by COVID-19. Trained staff provide strength-based support, resilience building strategies and community resources.

“Virginia COPES” is coordinated by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and we partner with the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards. Federal funding and technical support is provided through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

ARE YOU ...

- STRUGGLING WITH ISOLATION?
- TIRED OF SOCIAL DISTANCING?
- SCARED OF UNCERTAINTY?
- FEELING ANXIOUS OR DEPRESSED?
- WORRIED ABOUT YOUR FAMILY?
- MOURNING THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE?

CALL OR TEXT
877-349-6428

Trained Counselors Available 7 Days a Week
Mon-Fri 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., Sat-Sun 5 - 9 p.m.

Probation Peer Support

Our pilot program with the Virginia Department of Corrections provides peer support to adults with a mental health condition under state probation supervision. Peer Recovery Specialists in Winchester, Wytheville and Portsmouth were to facilitate wellness groups at District Probation offices. The Portsmouth pilot was underway and the other two sites about to begin when the pandemic hit, closing probation offices and disrupting the effort. We regrouped to provide individual telephone support, with plans to use video group sessions until returning to in-person wellness groups. These are an important tool in supporting successful community living and release from probation.



Thursday, September 24
12:00 - 12:30 pm

Victory for Mental Health and Recovery Art Auction



Victory for Mental Health and Recovery Art Auction

At our successful event in 2019, Gray O'Dwyer received the Mental Health Advocate Champion of the Year Award for leading law student efforts to remove the mental health question from the state bar exam. The application had been a barrier to students seeking mental health counseling. Guest speakers were The Honorable Brian Moran, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Doris Causey, Managing Director of Central Virginia Legal Aid Society.

In September 2020 we pivoted to an on-line auction of recovery art with 100 works by 30 artists, and a facebook live event with remarks from Commissioner Alison Land, interviews with two of the artists, and highlights of our services. We are grateful for the artists who shared their work, our auction supporters and event sponsors.



Virginia Peer Recovery Specialist Network

New! The Peer Into Recovery podcast provides unique insights into the profession of peer support. The 6 episodes to date feature interviews with Peer Recovery Specialists about their job and their personal journey of supporting hope and recovery.

- VPRSN website provides a resource center of volunteer and job opportunities for peer recovery specialists in Virginia
- 902 members in VPRSN Facebook group
- 970 subscribers to VPRSN e-newsletter



Alive RVA: Addiction recovery peer support in the Richmond area



Overdose deaths in Virginia increased 67% in the Spring of 2020 over the same period a year ago. Social supports are vital to recovery, and the social isolation and job losses from the pandemic have contributed to the rise in overdoses.

MHAV doubled our staffing support for the Alive RVA Warm Line, providing peer-to-peer recovery support and links to treatment or recovery housing 7 days a week. Jessica Whitton joined Jonathan Lang as part-time Certified Peer Recovery Specialists on the Alive RVA team. Other partners are the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority and the Substance Abuse & Addiction Recovery Alliance of Virginia (SAARA).

833-4PEERVA (8:00 AM to Midnight)

500% Increase in Mental Health Screenings

One indicator of everything we have been through this year is the tremendous increase in the number of people concerned about their mental health. Online screening is one of the quickest ways to determine if you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition.

10,086 Virginians took one of MHA's mental health on-line screenings between July and September 2020, an increase of 500% over the same quarter a year ago.

The most common screens taken were for depression and anxiety:

- 33% showed moderate to severe depression
- 16% showed moderate to severe anxiety

Online screening tools are a quick snapshot of one's mental health. A mental health provider can conduct a full assessment and talk about options for how to feel better. Mental health conditions are common and treatable. The sooner you get help, the better the outcomes. You can link to a Mental Health Screening through our website at www.mhav.org.

Victim Peer Support

A Victims of Crime Act grant supported plans for 4 retreat-style sessions of recovery education for crime/trauma survivors: Survivors of Trauma Obtaining Resiliency and Empowerment (ReSTORE). We completed one session before having to cancel the rest. However, we converted parts of the curriculum to two webinars, created two additional web trainings for small groups of survivors, and posted a series of resiliency-themed journal prompts on our Facebook page. With support from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, we plan to continue the in-person program later in 2021.

Recovery Education Programs

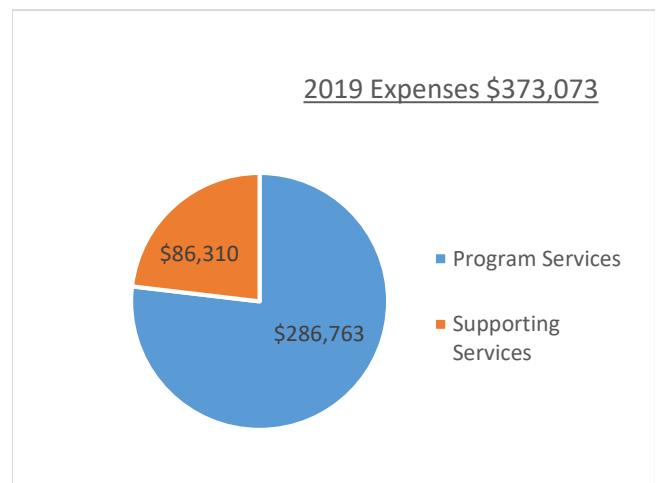
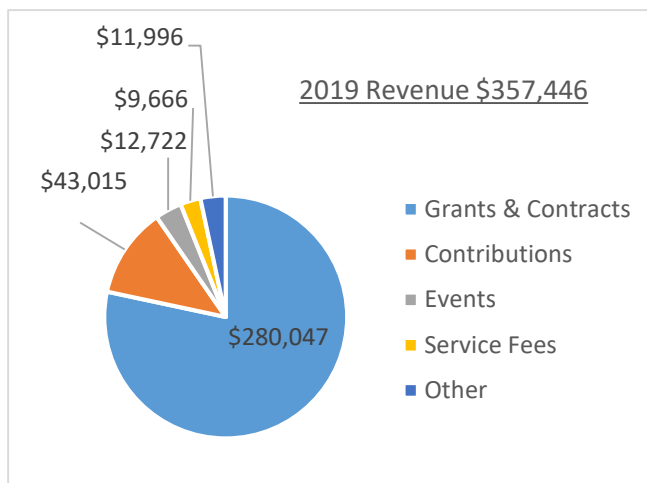
- Provided Advocacy 101 for 13 people over 3 days in February
- Provided 2 offerings of a (Re)STORE online training for 16 people in a special 4-hour interactive format
- Adapted portions of our other recovery education program to live webinars:
 - Trauma, Behavior and Shame: The Road to Resilience
 - My Life, My Choices: Advance Directives as a Tool for Recovery
 - Grief, Loss and Resilience
 - All are available for free on demand



Advocacy 101 graduates in Montpelier, February 2020

"It was educational, connected with others, and was absolutely phenomenal."

Calendar Year 2019 Finances



Board of Directors

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Partner for Mental Health

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Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association

Peer Advisory Council

Cynthia Evans

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

Heather Fossen

MHAV Senior Recovery Education Facilitator

Kevin Kelly

MHAV Senior Recovery Education Facilitator

Yolande Long

VOCAL Virginia

Tracy Ringquist

Rappahannock Area Community Services Board

Leroy Robinson

New River Valley Community Services

David Rockwell

Staff

*Executive Director***Bruce Crusier***Virginia COPES Warm Line Team Manager***Rachel Beck-Bergman***Virginia Peer Warm Line Manager***Cheryl DeHaven***Program Manager***Danielle Donaldson***Outreach Coordinator***Jenny Sappington***Probation Peer Support Manager***Eddie Wiggins***Senior Recovery Education Facilitators***Heather Fossen****Kevin Kelly***Alive RVA Peer Recovery Specialists***Jonathan Lang****Jessica Whitton***Financial Services***Aimable Munyakayanza***Peer Warm Line Team Lead***Keisha Patterson****Peer Warm Line Operators****Virginia COPES Warm Line Crisis Counselors****Probation Program Peer Facilitators**

Trauma-Informed Community Network Member

Virginia Behavioral Health Advisory Council

MHAV is the administrative agent and a member of this diverse statewide council, required for all states receiving federal mental health and substance use block grant funding. Its mission includes reviewing the state's federal grant application and advising on state priorities for behavioral health services.

MHAV is the state affiliate of Mental Health America. There are four local affiliates serving their localities:

MHA of Augusta

MHA of Fredericksburg

MHA Fauquier County

Partner for Mental Health (Charlottesville)

Mental Health America of Virginia is the state's oldest non-profit mental health advocacy organization, founded in 1937 to improve conditions in the state's mental hospitals and advocate for greater understanding of mental health. Today, in addition to system advocacy and public awareness, we provide a peer-run Warm Line and trauma-informed educational programs serving Virginians in recovery.



Advocacy

100 bills monitored during Virginia's legislative session



40 community events statewide with MHAIV mental health materials

Recovery Education

4 multi-day programs
39 participants



4 episodes and 362 downloads of *new* Peer Into Recovery podcast

Warm Line

99% warm line callers found the service helpful



463 hours of CEUs awarded



1,582 warm line calls answered by Peer Recovery Specialists



134% increase in warm line calls during pandemic

VPRSN

46 employer accounts on new VPRSN internship/job board



842 members in Virginia Peer Recovery Specialist Network Facebook group