To educate, empower, and advocate to improve the mental health of all Virginians
80th Anniversary “Saved by the Bell”

We celebrated 80 years of Advocacy, Health and Hope with a special event in September 2017, featuring remarks from Paul Gionfriddo, President and CEO of national Mental Health America. Highlights included honoring Bonnie Neighbour and Mira Signer with Transformational Leadership Awards for their advocacy leadership over the past decade.

Service Highlights

Advocacy: A priority for MHAV since our founding

“To promote actively the adoption of such legislation as will make possible an effective mental health program for the state.”

- The Mental Hygiene Society of Virginia
  February 19, 1937

2018 Policy Priorities:

• Increase Access to Community Based Mental Health Care
• Address the Needs of People with Mental Health Challenges in the Criminal Justice System
• Expand Peer Support Programs

“I’m excited to get more into advocacy. I would like to help find solutions or helpful progress so people can live better lives.”

• Tracked state legislation and budget deliberations; posted weekly updates for public
• Public comment on need for community-based services, supportive housing, mental health training for hospital security staff
• Mental Health Standards for Jails Workgroup
• Advisory Group for the Governor’s Center for Behavioral Health and Justice
• Mental Health Advocacy Days - With our advocacy partners, provided two events during the 2018 General Assembly
• Legislative study committees on health care access in jail and upon release, and the least restrictive transportation options for involuntary commitment
• Called for Board of Corrections to make public their reports on jail inmate deaths in custody
• Task Force on Reducing TDO Admissions to State Hospitals
• Publicized The State of Mental Health in America 2018, national MHA’s study, which showed Virginia ranking 40th among the states in access to mental health care
Began 10 years ago as phone support for ABLE (Agoraphobics Building Independent Lives, Inc.) before becoming the Statewide Non-Emergency, Peer-Run Warm Line for Virginia.

164% increase in warm line calls from January to June 2018 compared to same period last year.

**Now 7 Days/Week!** With support from Hanover MHA, in September 2018 service is expanding to 9:00 p.m. during the week and will begin weekend services from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

"The Warm Line was very helpful for me. I have called a few times over the last month, and each time I have called, I have felt like somebody is listening to me finally. I don't feel like I'm being judged or scaring off people."

**Recovery Education Programs**

- Developed new Facilitator Skills training
- Provided 7 multi-day recovery education to 71 people through CELT - Consumer Empowerment and Leadership Training, (Re)STORE - Survivors Obtaining Resilience and Empowerment, Facilitator Skills, and Advocacy trainings.

"Every module and activity allowed all participants to move at their own pace. There was no shame if there was hesitation or lack of participation; only acceptance and nurturing."

"This training and environment and the compassion and structure... has by far made this the best training I have ever attended."

Maintained the Virginia Advance Directives (VAD) website, providing information about advanced directives for mental health care to 8,000 users a year.
The national office of Mental Health America has launched the “National Certified Peer Specialist (MHA NCPS) certification” to recognize peers with the lived experience, training, and job experience to create a career in peer support anywhere in the United States. The certification is designed to exceed the standards used in public behavioral health around the country, and to meet the needs of private health insurers and private practitioners. MHAV is now an official testing site to obtain this credential.

Virginia Peer Recovery Specialist Network

- Trained 8 VPRSN Meeting Facilitators
- Held 19 regional meetings with 205 peer recovery specialists in attendance
- 440 members in VPRSN Facebook group
- 475 subscribers to VPRSN weekly e-newsletter

Testing Site for National Certified Peer Specialist

MHAV is a founding partner in the central region’s new effort to reduce deaths from opioid overdoses. Peer Recovery Specialist Jonathan Lang provides warm line support and plans to provide face-to-face support to overdose survivors in the next phase of the project. The number is (833) 4PEERVA, operating from 8:00 a.m. to Midnight 7 days/week.

Our partners in this special federal grant through the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services are: Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (which is coordinating the project), SAARA of Virginia, Friends 4 Recovery, Chesterfield Community Services Board and the Goochland Powhatan Community Services Board.

Alive RVA: Addiction recovery peer support in the Richmond area

VA 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.

Trauma-Informed Community Network Affiliation

Mental Health America of Virginia is proud to be a member of the Greater Richmond Trauma-Informed Community Network.

“I really like that your Warm Line is run by peers. That makes me feel more comfortable talking to you and sharing what’s going on with me.”
MHA Screening Results for Virginia

About Screeners in Virginia

- More likely to be women
- Two thirds are under 25
- 1 in 5 identify as LGBT
- 1 in 6 takes a screen for Bipolar Disorder
- 37% have a previous mental health diagnosis
- 6 in 10 identify as students
- 1 in 4 said that worksheets or coping skills to use at home could help them

Many people do not seek treatment in the early stages of mental illnesses because they don't recognize the symptoms.

SCREENING CAN HELP
Screening is an anonymous, free, and private way to learn about your mental health and if you are showing warning signs of a condition.

www.mhascreening.org

MHA
Mental Health America
B4Stage4

80% of people who took the youth screen, screened at risk
83% screened positive for moderate to severe depression
98% screened at risk for/have an eating disorder
72% of those who took the psychosis screen, screened for possible risk
77% screened positive for moderate to severe anxiety
83% screened positive for PTSD

results based on MHA screening data from 2017
Mental Health America of Virginia is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization serving Virginians in recovery, with wellness and healing as the foundational tenets behind our person-centered educational programs. We are the state representative for a national network that includes seven community-based affiliates in the Commonwealth.