Priority for State Funding Consideration
by the 2021 House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees
(partial list)

- MHAV thanks the Governor and the Legislature for supporting Virginia’s 40 local public behavioral health agencies (Community Services Boards) with these budget items:

  o **$30.2M in FY22 for the Additional STEP-VA Services:**
    - STEP-VA was developed to address: Accountability, Access, Quality, and Consistency across all CSBs.
    - STEP-VA services are intended to foster wellness among individuals and prevent crises before they arise.
    - These services at the local, community level will result in fewer admissions to state and private hospitals, decreased emergency room visits, and reduced involvement of individuals with behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system.

  o **$2.4M in FY22 for the Reimbursement Rate Increase for Behavioral Health Service Providers:**
    - These funds will increase the physician rate to 110% of the Medicare reimbursement rate, which then in turn also increases the rate provided to other health care providers.

  o **$17M in FY22 for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):**
    - Stable housing is one of the greatest barriers to discharge for individuals in state psychiatric facilities.
    - PSH funds remove that barrier and reduce state hospital census.
    - The 2019 report on PSH shows that state hospital utilization decreased 82% for individuals in PSH. This resulted in $9.5M in savings for state hospitals.
    - Eighty-six percent of individuals served in PSH remained stably housed.

- In addition to the above, we support adding an increase of $3 million for the MARCUS Alert Programs and Community Care or Mobile Crisis Teams:

  o The Governor’s introduced budget contains $3M for the first five sites to be implemented by December 1, 2021. However, the protocols in the MARCUS Alert legislation require a second round of five sites to be implemented by July 1, 2023. In order to meet this deadline, the $3M in additional funding will be needed in FY2022.

  o If funding is not included for development and implementation of the protocols in future sites, the money will have to be carved out of existing STEP-VA funds. STEP-VA funding was put in place prior to the additional requirements included in the MARCUS Alert legislation and should remain whole in order to meet the stated objectives of that program.