

Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board
Quarterly Meeting
Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 10:30 a.m.
Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
8004 Franklin Farms Drive
Henrico, VA 23229

MINUTES

Members Present: Lindsay Pickral, Chair; Lucy Beadnell; MacKay Boyer; Saundra Davis; Mary Jane Hall; Kimberly King; Ellen Nau; Angie Phelon

Member Present Virtually: Reynold "Rusty" Jordan; Donna Smith; Tara Ragland

Members Absent: Susan Elmore; Katherine "Kathy" Harkey; Cristi Zedd; Susan Jenkins

DARS Staff Present: Charlotte Arbogast; Laura Koch; Bronwyn Lewis; Ellie Rest; Catherine Harrison; Ansley Perkins; Fay Lewis

Welcome and Introductions

Lindsay Pickral, Chair

Chair Lindsay Pickral called the meeting to order at 10:32am. Members and staff introduced themselves and welcomed members "Rusty" Jordan; Donna Smith and Tara Ragland, who attended virtually. It was confirmed that a quorum was present.

Ms. Pickral read the powers and duties of the Board as a reminder about the Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board PGCAB's purpose and role under the Code of Virginia.

Review and Adopt Agenda

Lindsay Pickral, Chair

Lindsay Pickral presented the proposed agenda; Laura Koch requested to add an overview of the revisions to the PGP complaint process form to the agenda. Mary Jane Hall made a motion to approve the agenda with the proposed change. The motion was seconded by Angie Phelon. The members voted unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

Review and Adopt Meeting Minutes from March 15, 2025

Lindsay Pickral, Chair, and Board Staff

Board staff presented the minutes from the meeting held March 15, 2025. The minutes were approved as prepared.

Division for Community (DCL) Living Report

Marcia DuBois, DARS Deputy Commissioner

Ms. DuBois reminded the Board that DARS Central Office will be relocating to Cox Road during the fall of 2025. All DARS Central staff currently housed in three Forest Park locations will be in one building.

Ms. Dubois provided highlights regarding the new budget passed by the Virginia General Assembly:

- Centers for Independent Living: \$300,000 from the general fund in the second year to provide independent living skills training, peer mentoring, information and referral, advocacy, and transition services to people with significant disabilities.
- AAAs: \$750,000 from the general fund in the second year to increase support to Area Agencies on Aging.
- Villages: \$400,000 from the general fund in the second year to the County of Fairfax to support the Washington Area Villages Exchange for the creation of a pilot program to reduce the public health risk of social isolation among older Virginians by expanding the availability of Villages to additional sites.
- Dementia Case Management: \$400,000 from the general fund in the second year to be divided evenly between the Capitol Area Agency on Aging and local Office on Aging to create an interdisciplinary plan of care and provide dementia case management for 200 individuals.

Ms. DuBois also provided an update on the FY 2026 budget proposal from the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). She reminded attendees that Congress is ultimately responsible for the final appropriation of funds, which typically do not exactly align with the administration's proposal. Highlights from the HHS proposal include:

- Funding levels to remain stable for many aging and disability programs, including Office of Aging Administration programs.
- Elimination of funding for:
 - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
 - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
 - Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

- Section 202 and 811 Housing Vouchers for older adults and people with disabilities
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME)
- White House Conference on Aging
- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs)
- Limb Loss Resource
- Paralysis Resource Center
- Voting Access for People with Disabilities
- Reorganization of HHS:
 - Consolidate programs formerly housed at the Administration for Community Living (ACL) into the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). As part of the reorganization, ACF will become the Administration for Children, Families, and Communities (ACFC).
 - Combines the following agencies into the newly formed Administration for a Healthy America (AHA): Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), and some programs from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Ms. DuBois also discussed two recent DCL staff events. In May, Commissioner Kathy Hayfield joined Division staff to celebrate public service month and present service awards; staff also received a presentation on workplace safety. In June, staff participated in a day of team-building exercises.

PGP Complaint Procedure

Laura Koch, Public Guardian and Conservator Program Director

Ms. Koch explained that the PGP's complaint procedure needs to be revised and updated. Complainants are directed by the current complaint form to contact the program director of the Local PGP that is the person's guardian, and to forward the complaint to DARS if there is no resolution. The revised procedure will eliminate the first step and direct complainants to DARS. This will centralize complaint tracking and ensure complainants are not deterred from contacting DARS. DARS will ask the Local PGP to participate in investigating the complaint, if appropriate. Board members voiced agreement with the change in procedure and the draft complaint form. No concerns were raised.

Public Guardian Program (PGP) Updates

Laura Koch, Public Guardian and Conservator Program Director

Ms. Koch informed the Board that the PGP received no direct complaints since the last Board meeting, but Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia sent a copy of a complaint submitted by the family member of a client and the Local PGP's response. The staff handled this difficult situation appropriately and professionally. The complainant did not request DARS to follow up.

As Ms. Koch reported last meeting, Commonwealth Catholic Charities (CCC) was out of compliance with the ideal client-to-staff ratio of 20:1 as of February 15. The program is now back in compliance, having reduced the ratio from 23:1 to 19:1, despite taking on cases previously active with Jewish Family Services of Richmond.

Ms. Koch reminded the Board that CCC agreed to expand by 40 additional slots with the closing of the Local PGP run for many years by Jewish Family Services of Richmond (JFSR). When Danah Kaigler from CCC presented about this transition at the last meeting, she was asked to return to give an update. Ms. Kaigler was unable to attend the meeting today and will provide an update at the September meeting.

Of the 36 clients who were active with JFSR, CCC has either been appointed guardian or there is an upcoming hearing scheduled for 35. Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia agreed to accept the remaining client, based on the location of her residence.

The PGP is currently 94% full, with a total of 1,273 clients, which is almost no change from what was reported at the last meeting. The Program added 97 clients in the third quarter, compared to 86 in the second quarter; however, there were more removals in the third quarter (61 compared to 54). Thirty-nine active clients were removed, almost all due to death of the client.

Twenty-two in-process clients were removed in the third quarter. In almost all cases, this was either because a public guardian was no longer needed or due to issues with the referring party. The PGP has been encouraging local program directors to closely track the progress of individuals who were offered a slot while waiting to be appointed their public guardian and to set deadlines if the referring party is not moving forward with the legal process. The fact that removals of in-process clients increased by 10 in the last quarter likely reflects these efforts to free up slots for others in need.

Ms. Koch reported that the PGP held its annual training for Local PGPs and their staff at Virginia Center Commons Hotel in Glen Allen on May 7th and 8th. DARS was happy that several Board members were also able to attend this successful, well-received event. Attendees appreciated that there were sessions focused on stress management and well-being, as well as practical topics such as crisis prevention and dealing with end-of-life issues. Along with successfully executing this two-day event for more than 80 attendees, Ansley Perkins and Bronwyn Lewis, the PGP's specialists, created and facilitated a dynamic session that gave attendees the opportunity to work through a variety of challenging scenarios in small groups and formulate an action plan.

Ms. Koch ended by sharing success stories regarding two clients of The Arc of Northern Virginia's Local PGP.

Annual Review and Approval of Electronic Meeting Policy

Lindsay Pickral

The Board completed its annual review of the Electronic Meeting Policy. No changes were proposed. Lucy Beadnell made a motion to approve the policy as presented. The motion was seconded by Ellen Nau. The members voted unanimously to renew the Electronic Meeting Policy.

Election of Officers for 2025

Laura Koch

Ms. Koch opened the floor for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Advisory Board. MacKay Boyer nominated Lindsay Pickral for Chair. There were no other nominations. The members unanimously elected Ms. Pickral to serve another term as Chair.

Mary Jane Hall nominated Donna Smith for Vice Chair. There were no other nominations. The members unanimously elected Ms. Smith to serve another term as Chair.

Presentation: A Dementia Capable Virginia

George Worthington, DARS Director of Dementia Services

Mr. Worthington presented on the work of the Virginia Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission and the Virginia Dementia State Plan 2024-2027. He described the role of DARS Dementia Services, the state's dementia infrastructure, the plan goals, and coming updates to the Dementia Capable webpage to assist users to connect with information and resources. Mr. Worthington will follow up with an

invitation for Board members to attend a mini summit on dementia services on September 9, 2025.

Other Business

Lindsay Pickral, Chair

There was no other business.

Next Meeting

Lindsay Pickral, Chair

Ms. Pickral stated that the next meeting of the Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board will be on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., and will be an in-person meeting.

Public Comment

Lindsay Pickral, Chair

Ms. Pickral opened the floor for public comment. No comments were presented.

Meeting Adjournment

Lindsay Pickral, Chair

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Meeting materials provided to attendees:

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda June 17, 2025
2. Draft Meeting Minutes March 18, 2025
3. Proposed Legislative Committee Meeting Agenda June 17, 2025
4. Proposed PGP complaint form