

**Virginia Brain Injury Council
ALL VIRTUAL MEETING ON JANUARY 22, 2025**

FINAL MINUTES

ALL-VIRTUAL MEETING

January 22, 2025

12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

This is an **all-virtual** meeting, consistent with the approved electronic meeting policy adopted in October 23, 2024.

Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mike Puglia, Chair
Kara Keuthan, Vice Chair
Cara Meixner, Immediate Past Chair
Maria Altonen
Ann Bevan
Gayl Brunk
Kristen Galles
Rebecca Herbig
Amol Karmarkar
Kelly Lang
Joani Latimer
Susan Moon
Tricia Morgan (for Zenia Burnett)
Steven Nape
Derek O'Neal
Dan Reeves
John Reynolds
Maria Stransky
Carolyn Turner
Amber Walter
Jason Young

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Teri Morgan
Erika Sisson
Justine Young

STAFF PRESENT:

Kathryn Hayfield, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Commissioner

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Donna Cantrell, DARS, Staff to Council

Marcia DuBois, DARS, Deputy Commissioner, Division for Community Living

Charlotte Arbogast, DARS, Senior Policy Analyst

Joyce McKune

GUESTS and PUBLIC:

Megan Ingram

Amy Loving

Catherine McGill

Shane Caswell

Anne Blackstone

Welcome and Introductions

Kara Keuthan, Council Vice Chair, stood in for Mike Puglia, Chair, who was unable to lead the meeting.

Donna Cantrell, Staff to Council, noted that a quorum was present, and Kara Keuthan called the meeting to order at 12:33 p.m. She welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Donna Cantrell to take roll call and record attendance. Kara Keuthan acknowledged that the public was able to access the meeting via livestream.

Kara Keuthan provided the following membership updates:

- Kelly Lang and Amber Walter were officially reappointed to 4-year terms, effective January 2025.
- Rebecca Herbig from the disAbility Law Center joined as the new representative for the protection and advocacy organization in Virginia.
- Dan Reeves joined as the Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV)
- Justine Young, the Executive Director of Piedmont Senior Resources, was newly designated as the Aging and Disability Resource Center representative, and
- Zenia Burnett, was newly designated to represent the Virginia Department of Education.

Members were asked to keep their cameras on during the meeting; however, to minimize background noise, members were asked to keep themselves muted until their names are called or when they were making motions or seconds. Members were reminded that they must have their cameras on when voting.

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Review Proposed Agenda

Kara Keuthan drew members' attention to the agenda and asked if there were any proposed changes. Donna Cantrell noted that the agenda would need to be amended, indicating that Kara Keuthan was serving as the Chair for today's meeting. Cara Meixner motioned that the agenda be approved with that change; Steven Nape seconded the motion, and the Revised Agenda was approved unanimously.

Kristen Galles noted her concerns with members not having an opportunity to provide input on the development of the proposed agenda. Members briefly discussed her concerns, and it was noted that DARS and the Chair would discuss this with the Executive Committee.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

Kara Keuthan asked if there were any changes to the October 2024 Draft Meeting Minutes.

Kristen Galles noted that she objected to the Draft Meeting Minutes because they did not fully represent her objections to the Bylaws Committee's Recommended Bylaws. She noted that just prior to the October meeting, she had sent an email to Council members detailing her objections to the Bylaws. She requested that the content of her objections to the Bylaws be added to the official records or included as a separate attachment.

Members inquired with staff about the process for communications to and among Council members between meetings.

Derek O'Neal motioned that the Draft Meeting Minutes be approved as presented.

Kristen Galles objected and proposed a substitute motion that the Draft Meeting Minutes be amended to note that Kristen Galles provided an analysis of why she opposed the Bylaws as proposed and that her analysis be attached to the October Meeting Minutes. Derek O'Neal withdrew his earlier Motion and seconded Kristen Galles's substitute motion.

Members discussed the historical processes that have been used in the past for requests to attach documents to minutes as well as the advantages and disadvantages of such actions.

After considerable discussion on this issue, staff asked for clarification on Kristen Galles's motion. Kristen Galles confirmed that her motion was to amend the Draft Meeting Minutes and include her emails. Kara Keuthan called for a voice vote on the motion. The results of the voice vote were undiscernible; therefore, Donna Cantrell recorded a roll call vote on the Motion.

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Those Voting In Favor of the Motion: Cara Meixner, Dan Reeves, Kristen Galles, Derek O'Neal, Rebecca Herbig, Amol Karmarkar

Those Voting In Opposition to the Motion: Kara Keuthan, Jason Young, Kelly Lang, Steven Nape, John Reynolds, Maria Altonen, Gayl Brunk.

Donna Cantrell confirmed the vote was 6 for the motion and 7 against the motion. The motion failed.

Gayl Brunk made a new motion to approve the Draft Meeting Minutes as presented to the Council; Kelly Lang seconded the motion. By voice vote, the members present approved the Draft Meeting Minutes as presented, with Kristen Galles and Derek O'Neal voting against. The October Draft Meeting Minutes as presented were approved for the record.

Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

DARS Commissioner's Update

Commissioner Kathryn Hayfield welcomed members and guests to the January Quarterly meeting. She welcomed new and returning members and noted that the new members and organizations would make Council stronger.

She acknowledged that the Virginia General Assembly was in session, and that from DARS' perspective, this is a relatively light legislative session, as it is not a budget year and DARS is not involved in any current legislative studies. She invited members to provide input on their legislative priorities. Several members noted that they were tracking various bills that were specific to their organizations' priorities. The Commissioner noted that there had been a workgroup that looked at specific discharge placements for individuals with neurobehavioral/neurocognitive conditions that made placement in the state psychiatric hospital system inappropriate. The workgroup noted that these placements were inappropriate but that there were no other placement options available to this subset of individuals in Virginia. She shared that she hopes that advocacy around this issue continue. Jason Young noted that there was a member budget amendment submitted this year to address this issue, and discussions continue in the Priorities Committee and from the community on this topic.

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DARS' Brain Injury Services and Federal Grant Update

Carolyn Turner, Director of Disability Services and Serving as Interim Director of Brain Injury Services, gave a brief update on brain injury services in Virginia and within DARS. She noted that DARS is nearing the end of the hiring process for the Director of Brain Injury Services position and currently recruiting for the Program Specialist assigned to the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Trust Fund.

She shared that the Brain Injury Services Unit has been working with the Virginia Association of Community Services Board and has conducted a survey of training and support needs for services providers working with their population and we are currently in collaboration with them to address their needs.

She noted that the agency is working the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators to use their On-Line Brain Injury Screening Services and Support (OBISSS) tool to identify individuals who may have sustained a brain injury and identify what resources and referrals may be needed. DARS is also working with homeless services providers using this tool, all in an effort to expand their knowledge and access to appropriate services for individuals living with brain injury.

Jason Young asked if the results of the survey could be shared with the community, and Carolyn Turner noted that yes, they results would be shared once the project was further along.

Virginia Alliance of Brain Injury Service Providers Update

Jason Young, Chair of the Virginia Alliance of Brain Injury Service Providers (the Alliance), provided a brief update on the priorities of the Alliance for the upcoming legislative session. The Alliance partners with the Brain Injury Association of Virginia in the public space, and he noted their gratitude for recent funding expansion that allowed some measure of service for individual with brain injury in all areas of the State. He noted that that expansion will increase the number of individuals the stated funded organizations can serve, the needs remain largely the same as last year. As a result, the community organizations are requesting additional funding for workforce retention and to expand community services.

He reiterated that there is another budget amendment that addresses an alternative placement option for individuals in state hospitals with brain injuries.

Lastly, he highlighted that Wednesday, January 29, 2025, is Brain Injury Awareness Day. Jason invited all members to participate as members of the public. He noted that members cannot represent the Virginia Brain Injury Council, but as private citizens they are

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able to address their legislators and tell their story. Several members expressed concerns with the late notice for this event and hoped that it could be noticed earlier in the future to allow more participation from the community. Jason Young and Dan Reeves provided some insights into the scheduling process and hope for advance notice next year.

Council took a 5-minute break

Presentation: The Virginia Concussion Initiative: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Protecting and Supporting All Minds

John Reynolds introduced:

- Dr. Shane Caswell, PhD, ATC, LAT, CSCS; Executive Director, Virginia Concussion Initiative
- Dr. Catherine McGill, PsyD; Clinical Director, Virginia Concussion Initiative
- Dr. Anne Blackstone, PhD, MSPT; Managing Director, Virginia Concussion Initiative

Speakers described their project and the gains they've made in addressing the needs of students experiencing concussion. A copy of their presentation materials was made available prior to the meeting and can be accessed upon request.

Council took a short break.

Presentation: Overview of Policy Development

Kara Keuthan introduced Charlotte Arbogast, Senior Policy Analyst/Regulatory Coordinator with DARS. In the interest of time, Charlotte very briefly noted some access points in the policy development process and offered to go into more detail at an upcoming meeting

A copy of these presentation slides was publicly available prior to the meeting and can be provided upon request,

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

Priorities Committee

Jason Young, Chair of the Priorities Committee, briefly reviewed the 2024 Priorities Letter and noted progress made toward addressing those priorities. He reviewed what the Priorities Committee has discussed during the past quarter and what steps they are taking moving forward. He noted that as discussed earlier, the neurobehavioral issue is a hot button issue this session, and there is continued dedication on advocating for increased

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funding for services across the Commonwealth. He asked members if they had feedback or input to provide as the Committee was in the formulation process

Jason Young noted that the goal was to have the 2025 letter drafted prior to the April Quarterly Meeting.

Nominating Committee

Steven Nape, Nominating Committee Chair, reviewed the Committee's activities over the past quarter and described their plans moving forward with regard to the application and recruitment.

Committee met several times and approved a final application (in varying formats) and an informational flyer for use in recruitment.

- The application and flyers have been finalized and they are posted on the Council's website under the left side-panel tab for New and Prospective Members.
<https://www.dars.virginia.gov/vbic.htm#currentmeeting&gsc.tab=0> Donna will share each of these documents with members and partnering organizations immediately following this meeting.
- Donna Cantrell is working with DARS' Communications Office on messaging that can be used in social media and by other partnering organizations to reach out to potential applicants.
- Committee identified numerous other organizations that might be good sources for potential applicants.
- The Committee suggested implementing the use of on-line info-sessions for prospective members. DARS agreed and has scheduled 2 info-sessions for *February 5th at 6:00 p.m. and February 6th at 12 noon*. Members are encouraged to share this opportunity with individuals who may be interested in being appointed to Council. Donna will publicly notice and share the links with members.
- It is important to note that at Council's request, DARS reached out to the Administration for Community Living to inquire about whether or not Council members had to be residents of the State the Council served. On Monday, December 9, 2024, our ACL Contract Officer responded that, yes, according to the intent of the 2021 Funding Opportunity Announcement, brain injury advisory board/council members should represent the population of the state in which they are serving; therefore, they should be residents of that state.
- In summary, the recruitment process is open, documents and links are publicly available (<https://www.dars.virginia.gov/vbic.htm#gsc.tab=0>), and hopefully, new members will be on-board prior to the April, 2025 quarterly meeting.

The Nominating Committee will vet applicants and submit recommendations to the Commissioner for her appointment.

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Members inquired about the vetting process for applicants. DARS staff and Committee members noted that is the next step in the process. Kelly Lang asked if there was a formal vetting process in place. Donna will be sharing recent tools provided by the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators regarding recruiting and on-boarding board members that should inform that process.

Kristen Galles shared her concerns that the formal vetting process might be used to keep people with contrary views off of the Council, even though their views are very important. DARS staff and Nominating Committee members accepted her feedback and tried to assuage her concerns. The Nominating Committee will vet applicants and submit recommendations to the Commissioner for her appointment. Members discussed the importance of having individuals with brain injuries on the Council who can provide real life perspectives on their needs and feedback on the services available. Members with brain injuries currently on the Council shared their positive and negative experiences in participating on the Council.

Appoint Members to the Funds Dissemination Committee

Kara Keuthan noted that she needed to appoint the 2025 Funds Dissemination Committee. This Committee is responsible for making funding recommendations if the Virginia General Assembly allocates new dollars for brain injury services. Kara Keuthan noted that this committee only meets if the Virginia General Assembly allocates new funding to DARS for brain injury services. If the GA does not provide new funding for brain injury services, this committee will not convene. She asked for volunteers to serve, noting that at least one committee member should be an individual with lived experience of brain injury.

Volunteers include:

Dan Reeves
Kelly Lang
Kara Keuthan
Derek O'Neal

Kara Keuthan asked for a vote to confirm the members of the 2025 Funds Dissemination Committee. Mike Puglia made the motion and Derek O'Neal seconded the motion. The members were appointed following a unanimous confirmation vote.

New Business

In the interest of time, this item was tabled.

Acknowledgements and Award Presentation

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Kara noted that several members have terms expiring and thanked them for their service. Members who are rotating off of Council include:

- John Reynolds, At-Large Member since April, 2019
- Mike Puglia, Chair, At-Large Member since April, 2017. Mike also served as Secretary and Vice Chair before being elected Chair in 2023
- John and Mike have provided Council with years of knowledge and understanding of the Return to Learn and Return to Play protocols for students in Virginia
- Cara Meixner, Immediate Past Chair, At-Large Member since April, 2016. She also served as Secretary and was elected Chair in 2021 and Immediate Past chair in 2023

Because this is a virtual meeting, certificates will be mailed following the meeting. Members also joined in and offered their thanks to John Reynolds, Mike Puglia, and Cara Meixner for their service.

Adjourn

Kara Keuthan asked for a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting, reminding everyone that the next meeting will be in-person on April 23, 2025. Mike Puglia made the motion; John Reynolds simultaneously seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

Meeting Materials:

1. 2025 01 22 Agenda DRAFT
2. 2024 10 23 VBIC Meeting Minutes DRAFT
3. VBIC Pediatric Concussion Presentation 01 22 2025
4. VBIC Policy Development Presentation 1 22 2025