

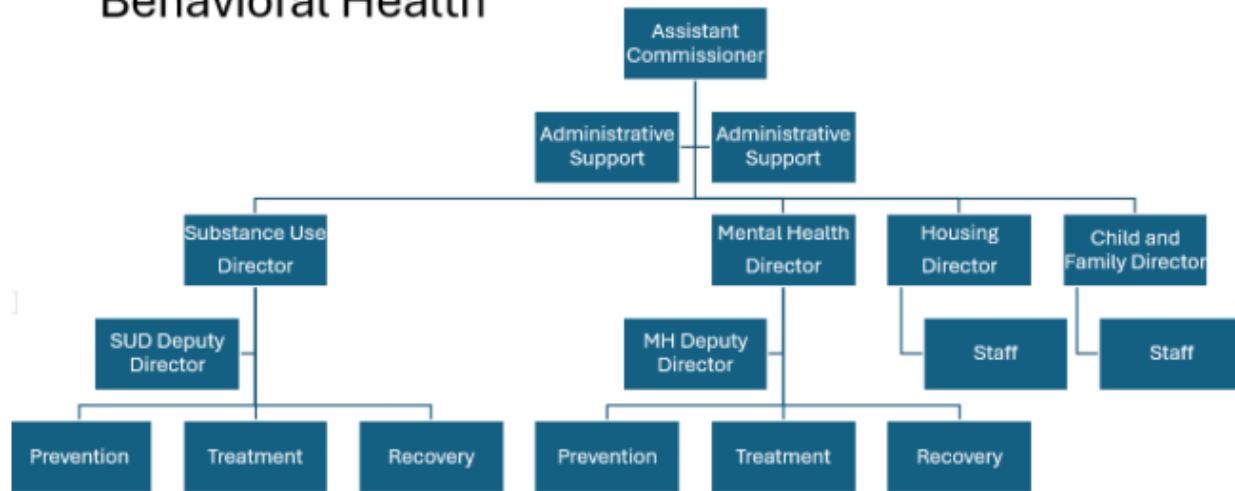
Sent on behalf of DBHDS Commissioner Nelson Smith

Dear Central Office Staff,

You have been doing such impressive work throughout DBHDS, and I am incredibly proud of how we are accomplishing major goals and better supporting the people we serve. I can't thank you enough for all your efforts advancing *Right Help, Right Now* and other DBHDS priorities to strengthen workforce, build community capacity, and modernize our system. You are all very aware of how organizations grow and change, and nowhere in Central Office has this been more evident than in the Community Services division. This division does phenomenal work supporting community programs and services for people with mental illness, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities. It also houses our critical licensing, human rights, and regulatory offices. Because of this division's essential mission for Virginians and families, I am working with Deputy Commissioner Heather Norton to continue to refine how the division is structured, and I want to share several changes with you today.

Structural Changes – When DBHDS created the Office of Recovery Services over 10 years ago, it was a new concept to have an office solely focused on recovery. The office has done tremendous work, particularly around peer services. Similarly, the Office of Behavioral Health Wellness has done incredible work around prevention and programs with direct impact on Virginians. But we need to give even more voice to recovery and greater emphasis on prevention than they are getting as siloed, standalone offices. The next step to ensure the concepts of recovery and prevention are woven throughout community services is to integrate these offices into the larger offices of adult mental health and substance use services. By doing so, we will better support service delivery across the continuum of care and elevate recovery and prevention in all our programs and services. There are no positions eliminated by taking these actions. In fact, the good work of these offices will be elevated by ensuring they are at the table for discussions across adult mental health and substance use disorders. You can see where both recovery and prevention are represented, along with treatment, in both adult behavioral health and SUDs in the organization chart below of the behavioral health area of the Community Services Division:

Behavioral Health



Data and Analytics – DBHDS is making leaps and bounds in modernizing our data and our information technology. We lead Virginia in incorporating cloud-based technologies and we will have a new data exchange in a matter of weeks that will vastly improve our data capabilities. We are creating a data and analytics office to ensure we harness data across all of the Community Services Division so we can speak more clearly about the outcomes achieved and about gaps we need to fill.

Please note there are aspects of changes in this division that we are still determining, and over the next month, we'll be sharing more updates. In the meantime, I've included an organizational chart for your review.

I am excited about this next phase to further sharpen our ability to deliver the highest quality results. As always, thank you for all that you do to support Virginians with behavioral health disorders and developmental disabilities, their families, and their communities.

Sincerely,

Nelson

[Nelson Smith](#)
Commissioner
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health
and Developmental Services