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MARCH IS INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH IN VIRGINIA

Richmond – Developmental disabilities are conservatively estimated to affect nearly 140,000 adults and children across the Commonwealth. This number includes the 71,500 adults and children over age 6 with an intellectual disability and the 1 in 91 children with an autism spectrum disorder. Citing the value and potential of individuals with such conditions, Governor Bob McDonnell proclaimed March “Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month” in Virginia.

“Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities want the same opportunities as anyone else – such as a home, employment and social activities,” said Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Interim Commissioner James W. Stewart, III. “With effective support systems close to home, most people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can live successful lives and participate actively in their home communities.”

In Virginia:

- Of the 140,000 children and adults estimated to have a developmental disability, 71,500 adults and children over age 6 have an intellectual disability and 1 in 91 children have an autism spectrum disorder.
- Approximately 18,500 infants, toddlers, and young children (birth through age 5) have developmental delays requiring early intervention services.
- In 2008, Virginia’s 40 community services boards (CSBs) served over 25,000 children and adults through intellectual disability programs and supports.
- From 1986 to 2008, the number of individuals receiving various CSB developmental services grew from 20,329 to 36,141, or by 77 percent.
- There are currently nearly 8,000 individuals living in Virginia communities with the support of the Intellectual Disability (ID) Medicaid Waiver. Services provided by this waiver allow individuals with intellectual disability who are at risk of entering a training center to be served in an appropriate community setting.
- There are currently about 2,600 people on the urgent needs waiting list for ID Waiver services and about 2,400 people on the non-urgent needs waiting list.
- There are currently just over 1,200 individuals in Virginia’s five state-run training centers.

Developmental disability refers to a diverse group of severe chronic conditions due to mental or physical impairments, or both, that begin before the age of 22 and usually last throughout a person’s lifetime. An intellectual disability is a developmental disability that is characterized by significantly impaired cognitive functioning and significant limitations in two or more adaptive behaviors.

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Available to citizens statewide, Virginia’s public mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse services system is comprised of 40 community services boards (CSBs) and 16 state facilities. DBHDS seeks to promote dignity, choice, recovery, and the highest possible level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life for individuals with a mental illness, intellectual disability or a substance-use disorder.