

# Meeting the Need: Services Provided by Virginia's Five Mental Retardation Training Centers

by Jane Anthony

## Editor's Note:

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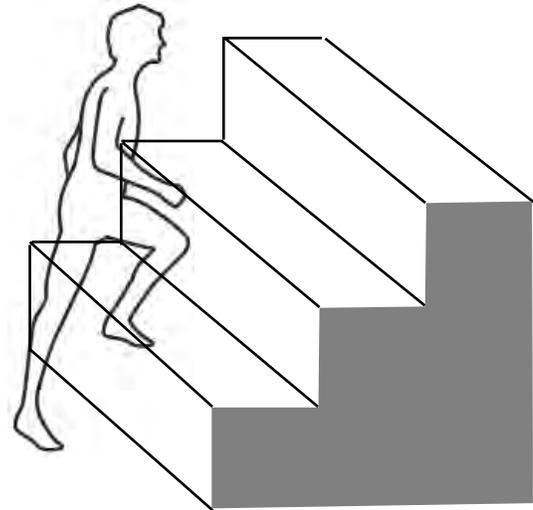
There are five regional residential training centers for individuals with a primary diagnosis of mental retardation operated by the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The training centers offer a range of highly structured services that address the occupational, speech, vocational, motor development, and physical health care needs of their residents. There are training centers, which serve eligible individuals who live in the region of the state in which they are located in the following Virginia communities: Lynchburg/Madison Heights, Fairfax, Chesapeake, Petersburg/Dinwiddie and Hillsville.

All five training centers are certified as intermediate care facilities (ICF/MR) under Medicaid. Medicaid (Title XIV of the Social Security Act) is a federal program under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Health and Human Services, which matches State funding for covered services to qualified clients. To be eligible for admission to a training center, an individual must have a primary diagnosis of mental retardation and must meet certain criteria related to their level of functioning that qualify them for admission to an intermediate care facility.

Training center services are

client-centered and highly individualized. To meet each individual's challenging and extensive requirements for care and habilitation, a network of clinical and direct care staff are available on a 24-hour basis. Training center services are provided in the least intrusive and non-restrictive manner. They are designed to promote growth and development in an integrated and diverse environment. Some training centers have agreements with community services boards (CSBs) for off-campus vocational programs. Upon request from the CSB, behavioral and habilitation training can be provided to community providers serving clients from the training centers.

The admission process into a training center is coordinated by the CSB that is responsible for providing case management services to the individual who is seeking admission. This is almost always the CSB serving the city or county in which the applicant resides. Eligibility is based on a diagnosis of MR and whether the center can provide the most appropriate services based on the intensity of need. After the CSB review is completed, the CSB then submits an application to the training center that serves its region. The training center reviews the information



provided in the application package. If the applicant is determined to be eligible for admission, a circuit court judge must certify the individual for admission. The facility director then sets a date for admission.

The training centers offer emergency and respite admission if space is available. Again, the CSB is the point of entry.

The CSB with case management responsibility also coordinates discharge planning with the training center when a resident, with his guardian/legally authorized representative (LAR) or family member has chosen to continue his training and habilitation in the community. ■



## Training Center Internal Support Systems

In addition to each training center's own Parents and Associates organization there are two very important organizations that support our training centers. The first is PAIR (Parents & Associates of the Institutionalized Retarded) of Virginia. This organization represents all the Parents Groups in all five Virginia Training Centers. PAIR's activities are legislative and informational.

The next level organization is VOR (Voice of the Retarded), of which PAIR is a state affiliate. VOR (see p. 93 in the Resources section) is the *only* national organization advocating on behalf of all persons with mental retardation wherever they may reside. Membership, located in all 50 states, is comprised primarily of parents and family members of individuals with mental retardation, with a growing number of medical and academic professionals joining the organization.

VOR provides information, support and advocacy services according to individual and group needs, keeps public officials, legislators, and the general public informed about issues which affect persons with mental retardation, and challenges organizations whose national policy does NOT support the need for Training Centers.

*Below is the contact information for all five training centers. All of the Centers have active parent groups; Call the director's office of the individual Center for contact information.*

### **Central Virginia Training Center**

521 Colony Road  
Madison Heights, VA 24572  
www.cvtc.state.va.us  
Facility Director: 434-947-6326

### **Northern Virginia Training Center**

9901 Braddock Road  
Fairfax, VA. 22032  
www.nvtc.state.va.us  
Facility Director: 703-323-4002

### **Southeastern Virginia Training Center**

2100 Steppingstone Square  
Chesapeake, VA 23320  
www.sevtc.state.va.us  
Facility Director: 757-424-8379

### **Southside Virginia Training Center**

Albemarle Street  
Petersburg, VA 23802  
www.svtc.state.va.us/  
Facility Director: 804-524-7208

### **Southwestern Virginia Training Center**

160 Training Center Road  
Hillsville, VA 24343-8408  
www.swvtc.state.va.us  
Facility Director: 276-728-1124

*Jane Anthony has played many roles in the field of advocacy since the birth of her son, Jason, who was diagnosed with Angelman's syndrome in 1993 at age 18. She is a board member of Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC) Parents & Associates; immediate past president of PAIR (Parents & Associates of the Institutionalized Retarded of Virginia), and Second Vice-President of VOR, a national organization that supports a full array of residential options. Ms. Anthony is currently using her advocacy skills to work on the policy level (local, state and nationally) to keep training centers a viable option, to bring services to communities, and to make sure there are choices, oversight and quality throughout the systems of care. She was instrumental in creating the RCSC (Regional Community Support Center) at the Northern Virginia Training Center. At the RCSC, medical services are made available to those in the community with mental retardation. Training Centers are a place where graduate level staffs are trained in developmental disability medicine, dentistry and all the allied fields. Allowing this expertise to be tapped for those who can't afford it or can't get services in the community is a true lifeline for families and a "win-win situation". Several states have taken this "Center of Excellence" concept and are tailor making it to their own situations.*