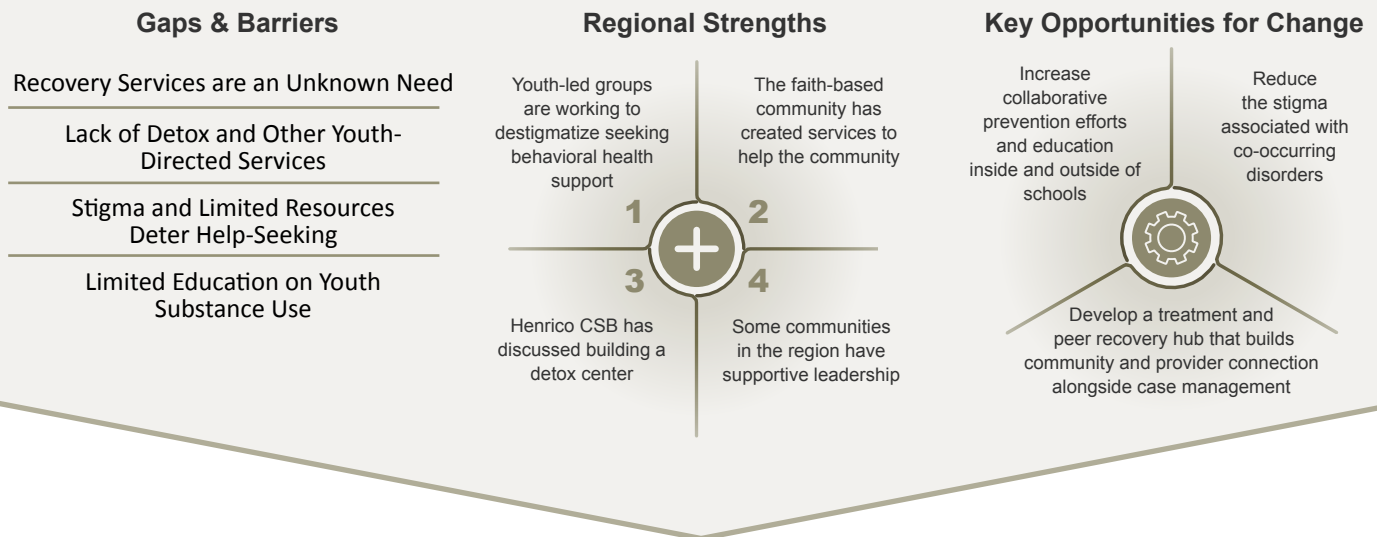# Youth Substance Use Strategic Plan:
Central Virgina

Project Background

In 2022, The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) contracted with OMNI Institute (OMNI) to conduct a statewide capacity assessment and strategic planning process to transform the substance use system of care for adolescents. As a part of this process, OMNI convened meetings with experts representing various sectors of the adolescent substance use system of care across Central Virginia. These experts participated in a virtual strategic planning session to identify future strategies that could be implemented to reduce the gaps and barriers identified during the capacity assessment stage of the project (see below).

OMNI further supplemented these planning sessions by assessing trends in adolescent substance use in Virginia and identifying evidence-based, best practice approaches related to the recommended interventions. This document provides a summary of the strategic planning discussions and outlines potential strategies raised through the work group for implementation in Central Virginia.

Capacity Assessment Results

Gaps & Barriers

Recovery Services are an Unknown Need

Lack of Detox and Other Youth-Directed Services

Stigma and Limited Resources Deter Help-Seeking

Limited Education on Youth Substance Use

Regional Strengths

1. Youth-led groups are working to destigmatize seeking behavioral health support
2. The faith-based community has created services to help the community
3. Henrico CSB has discussed building a detox center
4. Some communities in the region have supportive leadership

Key Opportunities for Change

Increase collaborative prevention efforts and education inside and outside of schools

Reduce the stigma associated with co-occurring disorders

Develop a treatment and peer recovery hub that builds community and provider connection alongside case management

Strategic Planning Decisions

	Recommended Area of Focus		Goal of Focus Area
1	Increase the Availability of Qualified Providers in School Settings	→	Boost access to care by housing substance use and mental health providers in schools
2	Implement an Evidence-Based Peer Recovery Support Model	→	Develop adolescent peer recovery services to strengthen the likelihood of long-term recovery
3	Increase Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment and Opioid Overdose Reversal Drugs	→	Improve treatment access and reduce the likelihood of fatal opioid overdoses in youth

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Recommendations

This section provides an overview of potential efforts to address the strategic planning initiatives and provides resources to aid in achieving these goals. Please note that the identified strategies do not cover all potential approaches to achieving these goals. The identified strategies were developed through background research into the landscape of adolescent substance use, an online poll with experts from Central Virginia, and an assessment of best-practices related to the identified gaps and barriers.

1 Increase the Availability of Qualified Providers in School Settings

STEP 1: Conduct an environmental scan to identify current school-based providers and determine regional needs

- Facilitate an exhaustive search of school-based providers to identify potential partners and gaps in services.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of providers, by sub-regions, categorized by service type and service population to produce a resource guide and develop a working understanding of the service capacities and areas of need in the region.*

STEP 2: Convene a working group of professionals to work with school and district leadership to establish buy-in for school-based services

- Organize a group of professionals who are well-versed in the current landscape of services provided by school districts.
- Focus on identifying schools willing to participate in increasing access to services and developing their staff.
- Facilitate a simple readiness assessment for each sub-region of school districts to identify gaps.
  - Provides a current and active "pulse" of each region's high-priority school districts, highlighting risk, capacity, culture, training need, and leadership alignment to adopt an action plan.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Data and evidence of need that can be provided to school and district leadership in order to increase willingness to participate in school-based substance use service provision.*

STEP 3: Develop an incentive program to aid in recruitment and retention for school-based providers (RHRN initiatives underway)

- Recruitment: Develop a loan repayment program/contract with set years of employment for benefit.
  - Develop collaborative relationships with colleges and universities to reach soon-to-be and recent graduates.
  - Offer flexible work options such as remote or hybrid work, 4-day work schedules, and flexible start and end times.
- Retention: Offer ongoing training and development to providers (with no additional cost).
  - Identify or develop career advancement options such as leadership training programs.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A set of recommendations to help foster a positive and supportive workplace and improve career longevity for school-based providers.*

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2 — Implement an Evidence-Based Peer Recovery Support Model

STEP 1: Identify existing youth peer support services available across Central Virginia

- Facilitate an exhaustive search of providers to identify existing peer recovery models, services/programs, and current best practices.
  - May be able to leverage the Region IV regional office for list of existing services and providers specific to adolescents (there is an existing peer network for adults).
  - During identification of providers, it may be advantageous to illicit definitions of peer support service programming.
- Develop an e-learning platform for sharing evidence based practices among providers.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of best practices, models, and services available in the central region; Develop an e-learning platform for sharing of EBPs.*

STEP 2: Identify regional and organizational readiness to implement adolescent peer support services in new and existing programs

- Leverage existing knowledge from the Office of Recovery Services that can assist the development of a readiness assessment that addresses the capacity of the region to adopt, monitor, and offer technical assistance and resources to existing and new programs. The assessment should also evaluate organizational capacity, and partner collaborations.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of champions by region that could serve as pilot sites for youth peer support services based on youth-specific definition.*

3 — Increase Access to Medication for Opioid Use Disorders and Opioid Overdose Reversal Drugs

STEP 1: Conduct a landscape analysis of providers to determine those who are currently providing medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) to youth and identify organizations currently providing opioid overdose reversal drugs (i.e. Narcan) to the community

- Data for the landscape analysis can be extracted from Region IV regional office, Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS), and Office of Substance Use Services (OSUS) for substance use and behavioral health provider lists.
- Survey known health clinics and all harm reduction organizations in the region that serve the adolescent population (private and public).
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of providers that offer MOUD services to adolescents as well as gaps in services by geographic area.*

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STEP 2: Conduct a data collection effort (for example, survey or interviews) with providers and harm reduction staff to better understand the barriers to providing MOUD and opioid overdose reversal drugs to adolescents

- Conduct small focus groups with health clinics, detention centers, CSBs, and harm reduction organizations to gauge barriers to providing MOUD to adolescents.
- Convene a multi-sector workgroup to engage with providers, organizations, and city/county government to reduce the barriers identified during data collection.
  → *Key Deliverable: A list of topic areas from the focus group results to inform the development of a learning series and further promote a campaign to increase MOUD services for this population.*

STEP 3: Maintain collaboration with providers and organizations to identify and address new barriers as they arise

- Design consortiums/committees to regularly discuss the current youth SUD landscape around MOUD and identify practices to mitigate risk factors.
  → *Key Deliverable: Up-to-date data and information on current practices, challenges related to any new state, local, or federal changes. This could also include a listserv of providers in the region to share important findings around MOUD and adolescent populations.*

With the strategies identified, OMNI is beginning implementation planning with the regional experts and Office of Child and Family Services to determine the resource needs and partnerships necessary to strengthen the adolescent substance use system of care in Central Virginia. Implementation planning is scheduled to be completed in early 2025.
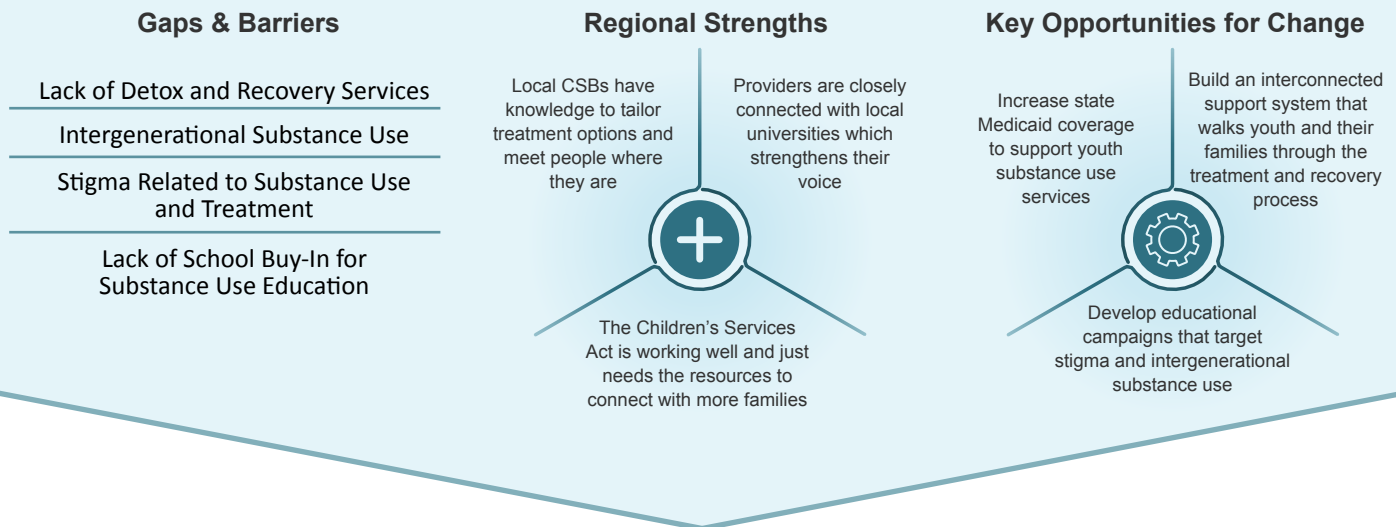
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Youth Substance Use Strategic Plan:
Eastern Virgina & Tidewater

Project Background

In 2022, The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) contracted with OMNI Institute (OMNI) to conduct a statewide capacity assessment and strategic planning process to transform the substance use system of care for adolescents. As a part of this process, OMNI convened meetings with experts representing various sectors of the adolescent substance use system of care across Eastern Virginia and the Tidewater Region. These experts participated in a virtual strategic planning session to identify future strategies that could be implemented to reduce the gaps and barriers identified during the capacity assessment stage of the project (see below).

OMNI further supplemented these planning sessions by assessing data trends in adolescent substance use in Virginia and identifying evidence-based, best-practice approaches related to the recommended interventions. This document provides a summary of the strategic planning discussions and outlines potential strategies raised through the workgroup for implementation across Eastern Virginia and Tidewater.

Capacity Assessment Results

Gaps & Barriers

Lack of Detox and Recovery Services

Intergenerational Substance Use

Stigma Related to Substance Use and Treatment

Lack of School Buy-In for Substance Use Education

Regional Strengths

Local CSBs have knowledge to tailor treatment options and meet people where they are

Providers are closely connected with local universities which strengthens their voice

The Children's Services Act is working well and just needs the resources to connect with more families

Key Opportunities for Change

Increase state Medicaid coverage to support youth substance use services

Build an interconnected support system that walks youth and their families through the treatment and recovery process

Develop educational campaigns that target stigma and intergenerational substance use

Strategic Planning Decisions

	Recommended Area of Focus		Goal of Focus Area
1	Develop a Regionally Relevant Anti-Stigma Campaign	→	Reduce stigma and stigma-related barriers in accessing early intervention, treatment, and recovery services
2	Create a Regional Resource Hub for Youth and Families	→	Eliminate barriers to treatment and other services by developing a resource hub staffed by highly-trained care navigators
3	Implement an Evidence-Based Prevention Curriculum in Schools	→	Identify and implement an evidence-based prevention curriculum in schools to prevent adolescent substance use

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Recommendations

This section provides an overview of potential efforts to address the strategic planning initiatives and provides resources to aid in achieving these goals. Please note that the identified strategies do not cover all potential approaches to achieving these goals. The identified strategies were developed through background research into the landscape of adolescent substance use, an online poll with experts from Eastern Virginia and Tidewater, and an assessment of best practices related to the identified gaps and barriers.

1 Develop a Regionally Relevant Anti-Stigma Campaign

STEP 1: Design a campaign that considers the unique regional dynamics of Eastern Virginia

- Develop a community readiness for change assessment to identify specific areas of need for stigma reduction (i.e., potential stigma problems to be addressed, what individuals or groups might be potential partners in this initiative, and barriers or challenges with this initiative).
  - Potential partners: Local non-profits, grassroots organizations, harm reduction agencies.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of topics and audiences based on readiness assessment for Eastern Virginia communities (this may include several campaigns based on the specific area in Eastern Virginia).*

STEP 2: Organize and host community workshops/events that provide education about substance use

- Promote Youth MOVE Virginia, a grassroots peer network that provides a space for youth with lived experience to come together, by region, and support others. Youth MOVE Virginia includes social media efforts, support groups, and leadership trainings.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Up-to-date calendar of Youth MOVE events and meetings to make the program more accessible to interested youth around the region.*
- Develop sub-region learning collaboratives to promote prevention and stigma reduction.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A list of champions in each of the sub-regions and increased awareness of best practices in reducing stigma.*

Step 3: Partner with local providers and community organizations to increase community outreach

- Facilitate a search to locate providers that offer substance use services for youth by catchment area and service type to develop a resource guide. Due to the combination of rural and urban environments, there may be a need to tailor specific approaches to the sub-regions within the area.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Increase provider footprint to populations of individuals with high service need and low resource availability, while also surfacing hidden populations who may also need support, such as culturally and linguistically diverse youth.*

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2   **Regional Resource Hub for Youth and Families**

STEP 1: Convene a working group of partners to identify resources for support and development of a resource hub

- Gather partners well-versed in substance use services from both public and private sectors.
- Participants could include representatives from primary care, mental health, oral health care, vision clinics, CSBs, non-profits, youth behavioral health coalitions, and interested personnel from localities.
- Review list of available platforms for the resource hub and connect with other regions to assess possible collaboration in order to use the same platform across Virginia.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A recommendation for a platform to host the resource hub and identified resources to begin building it out.*

STEP 2: Develop a telephone- and online-based system that connects providers and families with adolescent substance use experts and care navigation services

- Explore the VMAP Model, currently being used for mental health statewide, and engage and leverage lessons learned.
- Regularly assess and identify the substances of most concern in the region to identify and address additional area(s) of need.
- Further define the role of care navigator services.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A framework for behavioral health care coordination that is targeted to the Eastern Virginia environment.*

STEP 3: Generate recurring funding streams that support the hiring and retention of care navigators and consultants

- Recruitment: Develop a loan repayment program/contract with set years of employment for benefit.
  - Develop collaborative relationships with colleges and universities to reach soon-to-be and recent graduates.
  - Offer flexible work options such as remote or hybrid work, 4-day work schedules, and flexible start and end times.
- Retention: Offer ongoing training and development to providers (with no additional cost).
  - Identify or develop career advancement options such as leadership training programs.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A set of recommendations to help foster a positive and supportive workplace and improve career longevity for care navigators and consultants.*

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STEP 1: Convene a working group of partners to work with school and district leadership to establish buy-in for school-based prevention programming

- Organize a group of professionals who are well-versed in the current landscape of services provided by school districts.
- Focus on identifying schools willing to participate in prevention programs and relevant staff trainings.
- Facilitate a simple readiness assessment for each sub-region of school districts to identify focus areas for prevention programs.
  - Provides a current and active "pulse" of each region's high-priority school districts, highlighting risk, capacity, culture, training need, and leadership alignment to adopt an action plan.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Data and evidence of need that can be provided to school and district leadership in order to increase willingness to participate in school-based substance use prevention programming.*

STEP 2: Identify evidence-based prevention curriculum that would meet the needs of the region

- Regularly assess and identify the shared risk and protective factors of most concern in the region and/or subregions to identify and address additional prevention strategies.
- Review list of evidence-based prevention curricula and leverage working group to decide best fit for the region.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A recommendation for an evidence-based prevention curriculum to implement around the region.*

STEP 3: Implement evidence-based prevention curriculum in schools and regularly assess the impact of the curriculum

- In addition to the evaluation tool provided by the selected curriculum, design a structure to review the impact of the curriculum using quantitative (i.e. Virginia Youth Survey) and qualitative (i.e. interviews and focus groups, open-ended survey questions sent out via text or email) measures.
- Further develop partnership and communication efforts with school leadership to implement the selected evidence-based practices.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A framework for implementation of an evidence-based prevention curriculum around the region.*

With the strategies identified, OMNI is beginning implementation planning with the regional experts and Office of Child and Family Services to determine the resource needs and partnerships necessary to strengthen the adolescent substance use system of care across Eastern Virginia and Tidewater. Implementation planning is scheduled to be completed in early 2025.

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Youth Substance Use Strategic Plan:
Northern Virgina

Project Background

In 2022, The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) contracted with OMNI Institute (OMNI) to conduct a statewide capacity assessment and strategic planning process to transform the substance use system of care for adolescents. As a part of this process, OMNI convened meetings with experts representing various sectors of the adolescent substance use system of care across Northern Virginia. These experts participated in a virtual strategic planning session to identify future strategies that could be implemented to reduce the gaps and barriers identified during the capacity assessment stage of the project (see below).

OMNI further supplemented these planning sessions by assessing data trends in adolescent substance use in Virginia and identifying evidence-based, best-practice approaches related to the recommended interventions. This document provides a summary of the strategic planning discussions and outlines potential strategies raised through the workgroup for implementation across Northern Virginia.

Capacity Assessment Results

Gaps & Barriers

Lack of Detox and Inpatient Treatment Services

Low Support for Harm Reduction

Lack of Culturally Responsive Practices

Fear of Providing Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)

Regional Strengths

Strong mental health system of care

Current providers are passionate about helping youth and families

Substance use providers in the private sector are fast and responsive

Good collaboration between agencies

Key Opportunities for Change

Develop a singular hub for information and resources that is accessible to youth and their caregivers

Engage with the private sector to increase services available to marginalized communities

Create culturally responsive education materials and treatment modules

Create a public awareness campaign to combat stigma

Strategic Planning Decisions

	Recommended Area of Focus		Goal of Focus Area
1	Develop a System for Organizations to Share and Access Real-Time Information About Treatment Service Availability	→	Improve access to treatment services by increasing client and provider awareness of real-time service availability, including beds for inpatient treatment, detox, and other services
2	Identify and Implement Use of a Culturally Responsive Resource Hub for Care Coordination	→	Reduce the barriers to treatment and other services by developing a resource hub staffed by culturally responsive care navigators
3	Design a Culturally Responsive and Comprehensive Prevention Plan	→	Increase access and availability of upstream prevention services and practices

OMNI

Recommendations

This section provides an overview of potential efforts to address the strategic planning initiatives and provides resources to aid in achieving these goals. Please note that the identified strategies do not cover all potential approaches to achieving these goals. The identified strategies were developed through background research into the landscape of adolescent substance use, an online strategic planning session with experts from the Northern Virginia area, and an assessment of best-practices related to the identified gaps and barriers.

1 Develop a service directory to share information about service availability

STEP 1: Conduct an environmental scan to identify treatment providers in Northern Virginia

- Facilitate an exhaustive search of providers to identify potential partners and identify gaps in services.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A list of providers categorized by service type and service population to further develop a working understanding of the service capacities and resource-scare areas in the region.*

STEP 2: Convene a consortium of treatment providers to work toward a unified service availability directory

- Gather partners well-versed in substance use services from both public and private sectors to discuss current navigation systems and processes for assessing the availability of services.
  - ○ Include community members who have lived experience to inform and improve accessibility.
- Highlight current challenges and barriers with accessing availability of placements (i.e. Electronic Health Record access, lack of timely email or telephonic correspondence).
- Assess platforms to house the service availability hub and identify hub ownership and staffing.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A list of barriers, gaps, and accessibility considerations that inform real-time awareness of service availability and a list of potential platforms to organize a service directory.*

2 Identify and Implement Use of Culturally Responsive Resource Hub for Care Coordination

STEP 1: Convene a workgroup of partners to identify resources for support and development of a resource hub

- Gather partners well-versed in substance use services from both public and private sectors.
  - ○ Participants could include representatives from primary care, mental health, oral health care, vision clinics, CSBs, non-profits, youth behavioral health coalitions, and interested personnel from localities.
- Take the list of available platforms from the previous focus area and decide which would best meet the needs of Northern Virginia.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A recommendation for a platform to host the resource hub.*

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STEP 2: Develop a telephone- and online-based system that connects providers and families with adolescent substance use experts and care navigation services

■ Explore the Virginia Mental Health Access Program (VMAP) model, which is currently used for mental health statewide, and engage and leverage lessons learned.

■ Regularly assess and identify the substances of most concern in the region to identify and address additional area(s) of need.

■ Define the role of care navigator services.

→ *Key Deliverable: A framework for behavioral health care coordination that is targeted to the Northern Virginia environment.*

STEP 3: Generate recurring funding streams that support the hiring and retention of care navigators and consultants

■ Recruitment: Develop a loan repayment program/contract with set years of employment for benefit.

○ Develop collaborative relationships with colleges and universities to reach soon-to-be and recent graduates.

○ Offer flexible work options such as remote or hybrid work, 4-day work schedules, and flexible start and end times.

■ Retention: Offer ongoing training and development to providers (with no additional cost).

○ Identify or develop career advancement options such as leadership training programs.

→ *Key Deliverable: A set of recommendations to help foster a positive and supportive workplace and improve career longevity for care navigators and consultants.*

3 Design a Culturally Responsive Comprehensive Prevention Plan

STEP 1: Ensure that service providers across the continuum of care receive ongoing training regarding adolescent substance use with a focus on prevention and identification of risk factors

■ Conduct surveys with current providers to identify knowledge and skill gaps regarding adolescents.

■ Identify champions for core topics identified in surveys for training needs.

■ Develop a comprehensive training plan by creating a structure that outlines the training schedule, topics, and methods, while catering to various learning styles for engagement.

■ Develop a platform/training webpage (virtual meetings for webinars, digest of EBPs and recordings) to be utilized on demand by providers.

→ *Key Deliverable: A list of champions who are plugged into the community who can lead the delivery of trainings in prevention best practices.*

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STEP 2: Step 2: Identify and implement an upstream prevention curriculum designed for youth

- Identify champions for evidence-based prevention curriculum implementation.
- Identify a funding source for prevention implementation costs.
- Select an evidence-based curriculum for youth.
- Put together a plan for implementation that begins at a pilot school and then expands out based on the lessons learned.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Selection of an evidence-based curriculum and an implementation plan for the curriculum region-wide.*

STEP 3: Educate Caregivers on Youth Substance Use Prevention

- Identify or develop educational materials that focus on increasing caregivers' knowledge and developing their skills to support key protective factors, such as making time to listen, supporting healthy activities for youth, role-modeling social-emotional management skills, and identifying early signs of substance use.
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan to regularly disseminate the information in these materials across multiple platforms including webinars, printed materials, short videos, social media messages, and partnerships with services like schools and faith-based organizations.
- Establish or support existing networks where caregivers can share experiences and strategies for building protective factors.
- Implement the communication plan and regularly evaluate and refine the messaging and approach.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A toolkit that includes appropriate educational materials on protective factors and a plan to disseminate the information to caregivers across the region.*

With the strategies identified, OMNI is beginning implementation planning with the regional experts and Office of Child and Family Services to determine the resource needs and partnerships necessary to strengthen the adolescent substance use system of care in Northern Virginia. Implementation planning is scheduled to be completed in early 2025.
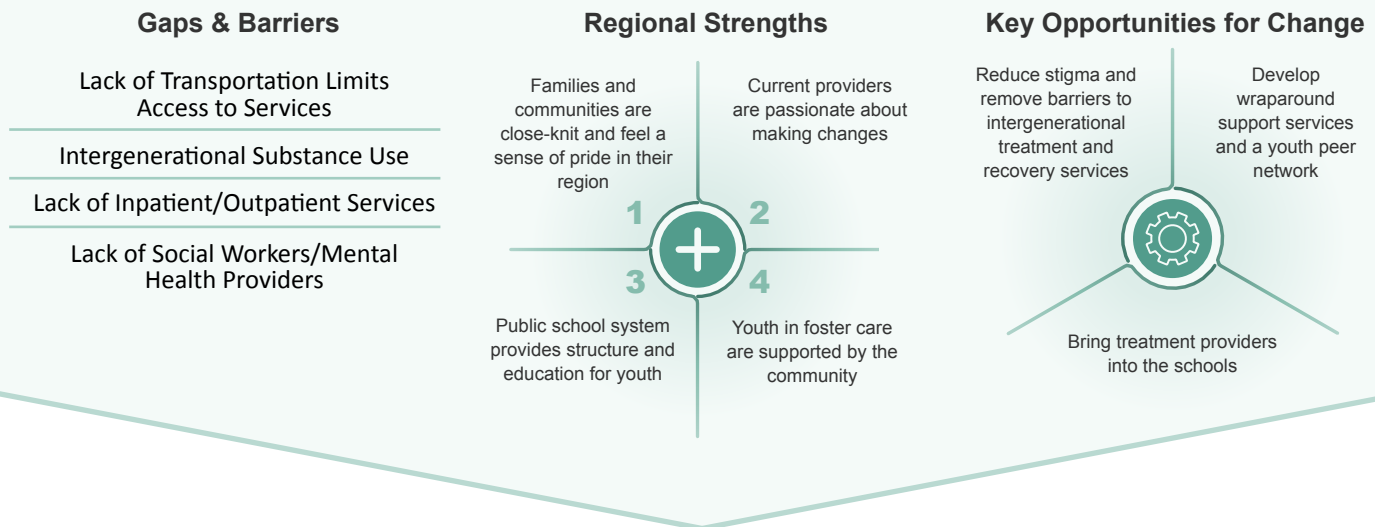
Youth Substance Use Strategic Plan:
Shenandoah Valley

Project Background

In 2022, The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) contracted with OMNI Institute (OMNI) to conduct a statewide capacity assessment and strategic planning process to transform the substance use system of care for adolescents. As a part of this process, OMNI convened meetings with experts representing various sectors of the adolescent substance use system of care across the Shenandoah Valley. These experts participated in a virtual strategic planning session to identify future strategies that could be implemented to reduce the gaps and barriers identified during the capacity assessment stage of the project (see below).

OMNI further supplemented these planning sessions by assessing trends in adolescent substance use in Virginia and identifying evidence-based, best-practice approaches related to the recommended interventions. This document provides a summary of the strategic planning discussions and outlines potential strategies raised through the workgroup for implementation across the region.

Capacity Assessment Results

Gaps & Barriers

Lack of Transportation Limits Access to Services

Intergenerational Substance Use

Lack of Inpatient/Outpatient Services

Lack of Social Workers/Mental Health Providers

Regional Strengths

1. Families and communities are close-knit and feel a sense of pride in their region
2. Current providers are passionate about making changes
3. Public school system provides structure and education for youth
4. Youth in foster care are supported by the community

Key Opportunities for Change

Reduce stigma and remove barriers to intergenerational treatment and recovery services

Develop wraparound support services and a youth peer network

Bring treatment providers into the schools

Strategic Planning Decisions

	Recommended Area of Focus		Goal of Focus Area
1	Increase the Availability of Qualified Providers in Accessible Settings	→	Improve access to early intervention and treatment services
2	Develop and Implement a Regionally Relevant Anti-Stigma Campaign	→	Reduce stigma and stigma-related barriers in accessing early intervention, treatment, and recovery services
3	Implement Evidence-Based Prevention Curriculum Designed for Youth	→	Prevent substance use among youth by increasing skills and protective factors

OMNI

Recommendations

This section provides an overview of potential efforts to address the strategic planning initiatives and provides resources to aid in achieving these goals. Please note that the identified strategies do not cover all potential approaches to achieving these goals. The identified strategies were developed through background research into the landscape of adolescent substance use, an online strategic planning session with experts from the Shenandoah Valley, and an assessment of best practices related to the identified gaps and barriers.

1 | Increase the Availability of Qualified, High-Quality Providers in Accessible Settings

STEP 1: Conduct an environmental scan

- Facilitate an exhaustive search of providers to identify potential partners and gaps in services.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of both providers, by sub-regions, categorized by service and service population to further develop a working understanding of the service capacities and resource-scare areas and to produce a list of available providers.*

STEP 2: Identify schools willing to participate in school-based services

- Foster communication efforts with school leadership to identify capacity for growth.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Up-to-date list of willing partner schools that includes the current level of need identified across programs/services and the need for workforce support.*

STEP 3: Educate school-based personnel on Youth Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (ySBIRT) and best practices for early screening

- Host workshops and learning sessions with school staff about the importance of connecting students to providers.
- Develop incentivization structures that aid in recruiting new providers and retaining existing providers.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Provide educators with the skills to identify, intervene, and provide referrals to youth who may need substance use services.*

2 | Develop and Implement a Regionally Relevant Anti-Stigma Campaign

STEP 1: Design a campaign that considers the unique regional dynamics of Shenandoah Valley

- Develop a community readiness for change assessment to identify specific areas of need for stigma reduction (i.e., potential stigma problems to be addressed, what individuals or groups might be potential partners in this initiative, and barriers or challenges with this initiative).
  - ○ Potential partners: Local non-profits, grassroots organizations, harm reduction agencies.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of topics and audiences based on readiness assessment for Shenandoah Valley communities (this may include several campaigns based on the specific area in Shenandoah Valley).*

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STEP 2: Organize and host community workshops/events that provide education about substance use

- Promote Youth MOVE Virginia, a grassroots peer network that provides a space for youth with lived experience to come together, by region, and support others. Youth MOVE Virginia includes social media efforts, support groups, and leadership trainings.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Up-to-date calendar of Youth MOVE events and meetings to make the program more accessible to interested youth around the region.*

STEP 3: Develop and disseminate guidance on person-first language (NIDAMED Language Guide)

- Engage the VA Office of Recovery Services' Regional Recovery Services Coordinator for Region 1 with assistance with development.
- Disseminate to school districts (staff and students), primary care clinices, transportation agencies linked to Medicaid Cab, and/or other partners for transportation services within the region.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Develop trainings on the proper use of terms related to substance use and substance use disorders.*

STEP 4: Partner with local providers and community organizations to increase community outreach

- Facilitate a search to locate providers that offer substance use services for youth by catchment area and service type to develop a resource guide. Due to the rural environment and geographic vastness of Shenandoah Valley, there may be a need to tailor specific approaches to the sub-regions within the area.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Increase provider footprint to populations of individuals with high service need and with low resource availability, while also surfacing hidden populations who may also need support, such as culturally and linguistically diverse youth.*

3 Implement Evidence-Based Prevention Curriculum Designed for Youth

STEP 1: Convene a working group of partners to work with school and district leadership to establish buy-in for school-based prevention programming.

- Organize a group of professionals who are well-versed in the current landscape of services provided by school districts.
- Focus on identifying schools willing to participate in prevention programs and relevant staff trainings.
- Facilitate a simple readiness assessment for each sub-region of school districts to identify focus areas for prevention programs.
  - ○ Provides a current and active "pulse" of each region's high-priority school districts, highlighting risk, capacity, culture, training need, and leadership alignment to adopt an action plan.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Data and evidence of need that can be provided to school and district leadership in order to increase willingness to participate in school-based substance use prevention programming.*

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STEP 2: Identify evidence-based prevention curriculum that would meet the needs of the region

- Regularly assess and identify the shared risk and protective factors of most concern in the region and/or subregions to identify and address additional prevention strategies.
- Review list of evidence-based prevention curricula and leverage working group to decide best fit for the region.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A recommendation for an evidence-based prevention curriculum to implement around the region.*

STEP 3: Implement evidence-based prevention curriculum in schools and regularly assess the impact of the curriculum

- In addition to the evaluation tool provided by the selected curriculum, design a structure to review the impact of the curriculum using quantitative (i.e. Virginia Youth Survey) and qualitative (i.e. interviews and focus groups, open-ended survey questions sent out via text or email) measures.
- Further develop partnership and communication efforts with school leadership to implement the selected evidence-based practices.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A framework for implementation of an evidence-based prevention curriculum around the region.*

With the strategies identified, OMNI is beginning implementation planning with the regional experts and Office of Child and Family Services to determine the resource needs and partnerships necessary to strengthen the adolescent substance use system of care in Shenandoah Valley. Implementation Planning is scheduled to be completed in early 2025.

OMNI

Youth Substance Use Strategic Plan:
Southwestern Virginia

Project Background

In 2022, The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) contracted with OMNI Institute (OMNI) to conduct a statewide capacity assessment and strategic planning process to transform the substance use system of care for adolescents. As a part of this process, OMNI convened meetings with experts representing various sectors of the adolescent substance use system of care across Southwestern Virginia. These experts participated in a virtual strategic planning session to identify future strategies that could be implemented to reduce the gaps and barriers identified during the capacity assessment stage of the project (see below).

OMNI further supplemented these planning sessions by assessing trends in adolescent substance use in Virginia and identifying evidence-based, best-practice approaches related to the recommended interventions. This document provides a summary of the strategic planning discussions and outlines potential strategies raised through the workgroup for implementation across the region.

Capacity Assessment Results

Gaps & Barriers

Changes in Medicaid Limit Providers' Ability to Bill for Services

Lack of Detox and Other Youth-Directed Services

Lack of Peer Recovery Providers

Intergenerational Substance Use

Regional Strengths

Current diversion programs have assisted in connecting youth with services

Some schools have a strong desire to support prevention efforts

Community members feel a sense of pride for their region and want to see it thrive

Key Opportunities for Change

Create culturally responsive education that addresses intergenerational substance use

Address transportation, internet, and other resource barriers

Develop a treatment network that caters specifically to youth and is separate from adults

Strategic Planning Decisions

	Recommended Area of Focus		Goal of Focus Area
1	Implement Evidence-Based Prevention Curriculum Designed for Youth	→	Expand evidence-based prevention education efforts both in schools and in community groups (e.g., churches, medical providers)
2	Develop a Regionally Relevant Media Campaign to Reduce Stigma	→	Develop a community-based anti-stigma campaign that aims to shift perceptions for community members and providers
3	Increase Equitable Access to Treatment	→	Increase access to treatment by bolstering transportation and reduced payment options

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Recommendations

This section provides an overview of potential efforts to address the strategic planning initiatives and provides resources to aid in achieving these goals. Please note that the identified strategies do not cover all potential approaches to achieving these goals. The identified strategies were developed through background research into the landscape of adolescent substance use, an online strategic planning session with experts from across Southwestern Virginia, an online poll of workgroup members who were unable to attend the planning meeting, and an assessment of best-practices related to the identified gaps and barriers.

1   Implement Evidence-Based Prevention Curriculum Designed for Youth

STEP 1: Convene a working group of partners to work with school and district leadership to establish buy-in for school-based prevention programming

- Organize a group of professionals who are well-versed in the current landscape of services provided by school districts.
- Focus on identifying schools willing to participate in prevention programs and relevant staff trainings.
- Facilitate a simple readiness assessment for each sub-region of school districts to identify focus areas for prevention programs.
  - Provides a current and active "pulse" of each region's high-priority school districts, highlighting risk, capacity, culture, training need, and leadership alignment to adopt an action plan.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Data and evidence of need that can be provided to school and district leadership in order to increase willingness to participate in school-based substance use prevention programming..*

STEP 2: Identify evidence-based prevention curriculum that would meet the needs of the region

- Regularly assess and identify the shared risk and protective factors of most concern in the region and/or subregions to identify and address additional prevention strategies.
- Review list of evidence-based prevention curricula and leverage working group to decide best fit for the region.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A recommendation for an evidence-based prevention curriculum to implement around the region.*

STEP 3: Implement evidence-based prevention curriculum in schools and regularly assess the impact of the curriculum

- In addition to the evaluation tool provided by the selected curriculum, design a structure to review the impact of the curriculum using quantitative (i.e. Virginia Youth Survey) and qualitative (i.e. interviews and focus groups, open-ended survey questions sent out via text or email) measures.
- Further develop partnership and communication efforts with school leadership to implement the selected evidence-based practices.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A framework for implementation of an evidence-based prevention curriculum around the region.*

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2   Develop a Regionally Relevant Media Campaign to Reduce Stigma

STEP 1: Design a campaign that considers the unique regional dynamics of Southwestern Virginia

- Develop a community readiness for change assessment to identify specific areas of need for stigma reduction (i.e., potential stigma problems to be addressed, what individuals or groups might be potential partners in this initiative, and barriers or challenges with this initiative).
  - Potential partners: Local non-profits, grassroots organizations, harm reduction agencies.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of topics and audiences based on readiness assessment for Southwestern communities (this may include several campaigns based on the specific area in Southwest Virginia).*

STEP 2: Organize and host community workshops and events that provide education about substance use

- Promote Youth MOVE Virginia, a grassroots peer network that provides a space for youth with lived experience to come together, by region, and support others. Youth MOVE Virginia includes social media efforts, support groups, and leadership trainings.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Up-to-date calendar of Youth MOVE events and meetings to make the program more accessible to interested youth around the region.*

STEP 3: Develop sub-region learning collaboratives to promote prevention and stigma reduction

- → *Key Deliverable: A list of champions in each of the sub-regions and increased awareness of best practices in reducing stigma.*

STEP 4: Partner with local providers and community organizations to increase community outreach

- Facilitate a search to locate providers that offer substance use services for youth by catchment area and service type to develop a resource guide. Due to the rural environment and geographic vastness of Southwest Virginia, there may be a need to tailor specific approaches to the sub-regions within the area.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Increase provider footprint to populations of individuals with high service need and low resource availability, while also surfacing hidden populations such as culturally and linguistically diverse youth.*

3   Increase Equitable Access to Treatment

STEP 1: Conduct an environmental scan to determine service access equity in Southwestern Virginia

- Facilitate an exhaustive search of providers to identify potential partners and identify gaps in access to services.
  - Convene a working group to address service access inequities and promote collaboration with local service providers.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of providers, by sub-regions, categorized by service type and service population to further develop a working understanding of the service capacities and resource-scare areas and to produce a list of available providers.*
- Engage a group of direct service providers (from all sectors) to provide insight into service access inequities across the continuum of care.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A list of service inequities in each sub-region that spans the continuum of care for youth.*

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STEP 2: Identify best practices to support the development of transportation services to improve access to care

- Assess and identify the transportation needs of the region and/or subregions (i.e. personal vehicle access, bus station availability, and proximity to care).
- Identify champion organizations willing to pilot a transportation service program.
  - Pilot programs may include volunteer drivers or distribution of gas cards to offset transportation costs for patients.
- Continue to seek out funding opportunities from the Opioid Abatement Authority. This would include working with cities and counties to develop plans as funding is rolled out.
  → *Key Deliverable: An overview of the transportation needs by sub-region of Southwest Virginia.*

STEP 3: Improve accessibility of provider locations by moving away from traditional office-based treatment settings

- Create community hubs to act as an access point for providers by use of electronic devices via telehealth (i.e. virtual sessions in private rooms located in libraries).
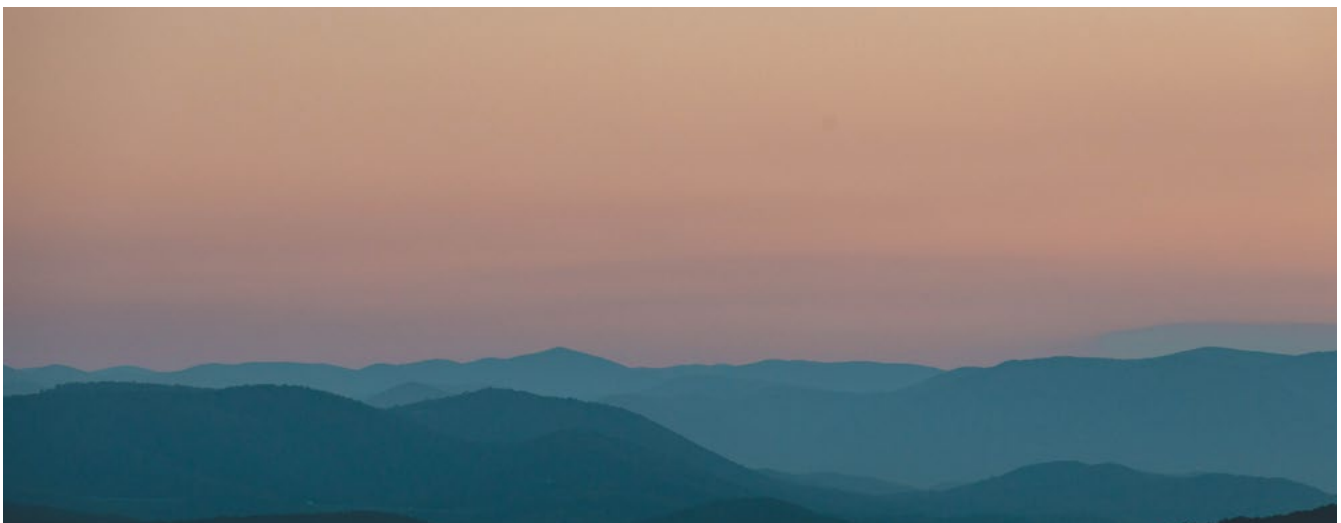 - Scan the community for willing partner organizations to act as a hub for telehealth services.
  → *Key Deliverable: A list of partners to act as hubs and recommendations for the first pilot site.*

STEP 4: Reduce the cost of substance use treatment by working with providers to offer flexible payment options

- Identify grant opportunities that support providers in offering reduced-cost substance use treatment (such as sliding scale fees).
  → *Key Deliverable: A list of grant opportunities to help reduce the cost of substance use services for youth.*

With the strategies identified, OMNI is beginning implementation planning with the regional experts and Office of Child and Family Services to determine the resource needs and partnerships necessary to strengthen the adolescent substance use system of care in Southwestern Virginia. Implementation planning is scheduled to be completed in early 2025.

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Youth Substance Use Strategic Plan:
Statewide Plan

Project Background

In 2022, The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) contracted with OMNI Institute (OMNI) to conduct a statewide capacity assessment and strategic planning process to transform the substance use system of care for adolescents. As a part of this process, OMNI convened meetings with experts representing various sectors of the adolescent substance use system of care across Virginia. These experts participated in a virtual strategic planning session to identify future strategies that could be implemented to reduce the gaps and barriers identified during the capacity assessment stage of the project (see below).

OMNI further supplemented these planning sessions by assessing trends in adolescent substance use in Virginia and identifying evidence-based, best practice approaches related to the recommended interventions. This document provides a summary of the strategic planning discussions and outlines potential strategies raised through the statewide workgroup for implementation across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Capacity Assessment Results

Gaps & Barriers

Lack of Detox, Inpatient, and Outpatient Treatment Services

Stigma Related to Substance Use and Help-Seeking

No Regional or Centralized Support Hubs

Resource-Related Barriers

Regional Strengths

Community organizations have fostered awareness and pushed to develop resources

Local CSBs have worked to provide resources that other providers are lacking

Providers are passionate and willing to make change

Key Opportunities for Change

Address stigma through evidence-based campaigns that target specific communities around the state

Support and incentivize treatment providers to enhance their motivation to work with youth through policy intervention

Develop regional and statewide resource hubs that link youth and families to local service providers

Strategic Planning Decisions

	Recommended Area of Focus		Goal of Focus Area
1	Strengthen the Workforce Through Innovative Recruitment and Retention Strategies	→	Increase service availability across the state by recruiting and retaining service providers
2	Expand School-Based Comprehensive Health Clinics to All Regions	→	Increase access to physical and mental/behavioral care through embedded school health services
3	Implement an Evidence-Based Peer Recovery Support Model in Each Region	→	Develop adolescent peer recovery services across the Commonwealth

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Recommendations

This section provides an overview of potential efforts to address the strategic planning initiatives and provides resources to aid in achieving these goals. Please note that the identified strategies do not cover all potential approaches to achieving these goals. The identified strategies were developed through background research into the landscape of adolescent substance use, an online strategic planning session with experts working at the state level in Virginia, and an assessment of best-practices related to the identified gaps and barriers.

1 Strengthen the Workforce Through Innovative Recruitment and Retention Strategies

STEP 1: Conduct a survey of providers to identify retention needs across the state

- Providers should be selected from CSBs, non-profits, and private practices.
  - Create a comprehensive survey that includes questions about job satisfaction, work environment, benefits, career development opportunities, and any other factors that might affect retention (data from RHRN to inform).
    - Focus on factors that influence provider retention, identify areas with high turnover, and gather suggestions for improvement.
      - → *Key Deliverable: A data set that helps identify common themes, areas of concern, and retention issues to plan for a strategic approach to meeting needs across the Commonwealth.*

STEP 2: Develop an incentive program to aid in recruitment and retention (RHRN initiatives underway)

- Recruitment: Develop a loan repayment program/contract with set years of employment for benefit.
  - Develop collaborative relationships with colleges and universities to reach soon-to-be and recent graduates.
  - Offer flexible work options such as remote or hybrid work, 4-day work schedules, and flexible start and end times.
- Retention: Offer ongoing training and development to providers (with no additional cost).
  - Identify or develop career advancement options such as leadership training programs.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A set of recommendations to help foster a positive and supportive workplace and improve career longevity for providers across the substance use system of care.*

STEP 3: Develop a streamlined service delivery training system for providers

- Conduct surveys with current providers to identify knowledge, skill gaps, and areas of interest.
- Identify champions for core topics identified in provider surveys.
- Leverage lessons learned from VMAP, as well as connections and provider resource needs.
  - → *Key Deliverable: List of core topics for training system (i.e. treatment modalities, client engagement, cultural competency).*

Step 4: Create a technical assistance (TA) support system to aid the adolescent substance use service provider workforce with their needs

- Leverage the DBHDS Office of Adult Community Behavioral Health's Block Grant Specialist roles (formally Behavioral Health Consultant roles), to establish regionally-based youth Behavioral Health Consultants to act as a liaison and representative for an assigned region to offer training.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A group of dedicated staff for each region that will be well-versed in the current landscape and resources available.*

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2 Expand School-Based Comprehensive Health Clinics to All Regions

STEP 1: Conduct an environmental scan to identify current school-based health clinics and determine regional needs and capacity to grow substance use services in schools

- Facilitate an exhaustive search of providers to identify current access and gaps in school district areas.
- Extract substance use data, by region, to determine pockets of areas with the most need and rank them from high to low priority.
- Facilitate a capacity needs assessment to determine the growth potential and resource needs to move forward with the adoption of school-based health clinics, with a focus on those determined to be high-priority.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A list of providers in each region, organized by catchment area, that identifies the availability of school-based health clinics in that area in order to highlight where to target expansion and capacity building.*

STEP 2: Convene a working group of professionals to work with school and district leadership to establish buy-in for school-based services.

- Survey providers on their interest in participating in workgroups to expand school-based health services.
  - Participants in these workgroups could include individuals from the following professions: primary care, mental health, oral health, vision clinics, CSBs, non-profits, and youth behavioral health coalitions.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A list of champions from the above disciplines to provide data-informed presentations, outreach, and information to school district leadership on benefits of participation such as overall prevention and decreased absences.*

STEP 3: Assess readiness for implementation across schools/school districts and identify areas of need

- Facilitate a readiness assessment to those areas deemed "high-priority" based on capacity needs assessment to explore community interest and support further evaluating available resources (both financial and physical infrastructure).
  - → *Key Deliverable: The assessment should provide a current and active "pulse" of each region's high priority school districts, highlighting risk, capacity, culture, training need, and leadership alignment to adopt an action plan by region.*

Step 4: Recruit and retain personnel for school-based clinics

- Recruitment: Develop a loan repayment program/contract with set years of employment for benefit.
  - Develop collaborative relationships with colleges and universities to reach soon-to-be and recent graduates.
  - Offer flexible work options such as remote or hybrid work, 4-day work schedules, and flexible start and end times.
- Retention: Offer ongoing training and development to providers (with no additional cost).
  - Identify or develop career advancement options such as leadership training programs.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A set of recommendations to help foster a positive and supportive workplace and improve career longevity for school-based providers.*

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STEP 5: Provide comprehensive substance use training to school staff

- Train all school staff on ySBIRT.
- Host workshops and learning sessions with school-based staff about the importance of connecting students to services, including the integration of school staff and clinic staff.
  - → *Key Deliverable: Training curriculum for school staff to help increase use of school-based health clinics for screening and treatment, and decreasing the disparities caused by financial, geographic and/or cultural barriers.*

3 | Implement an Evidence-Based Peer Recovery Support Model in Each Region

STEP 1: Identify existing youth peer support services available across Virginia

- Conduct an environmental scan of current youth-focused peer support services (partners to include for existing programs include Office of Recovery Services, NAMI, SAARA of Virginia, Family Support Partners).
  - ○ Scan organizational definitions and support for these youth peer support services.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A resource guide of all available peer support services and programs for youth.*

STEP 2: Conduct a literature review to identify best practices in youth peer support and identify existing evidence-based models

- → *Key Deliverable: A list of best practices on youth peer support services that can be used to expand youth peer support services around the Commonwealth.*

Step 3: Identify state and organizational readiness to implement adolescent peer support services in new and existing programs

- Leverage existing knowledge from the Office of Recovery Services and develop a readiness assessment for each region to assess the capacity of the state to monitor and offer technical assistance and resources to new and existing youth peer support programs.
  - → *Key Deliverable: A list of champions in each region that could serve as pilot sites for the expansion of youth peer support services.*

With the strategies identified, OMNI is beginning implementation planning with the state-level experts and Office of Child and Family Services to determine the resource needs and partnerships necessary to strengthen the adolescent substance use system of care across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Implementation planning is scheduled to be completed in early 2025.

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