NAMI Virginia Requests at the 2021 Budget Hearings:

NAMI Virginia supports the following funding amendments proposed by Governor Northam:

1) Additional funds of $80,000 for FY2021 and $691,612 for FY2022 for the administrative costs of implementing the Marcus Alert legislation. These funds will be used to maintain the crisis hotline, evaluate current crisis system capacity in localities, and contract for a public advertising campaign.

2) The restoration of $726,807 in central office costs for the implementation of STEP-VA.

3) A $2,500,000 increase in FY2022 for discharge assistance plans (DAP) funding for those individuals moving from state-operated mental health facilities to community placements.

4) An additional $129,253 in FY2022 to train the workforce to support Behavioral Health Enhancement. These funds will support the administrative costs of an enhanced behavioral health care system.

NAMI Virginia supports the following proposed CIT language changes to expand the use of Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) training funds:

Amends language to allow funds currently earmarked for law enforcement training in rural localities to be used to address additional CIT programs and programs at CIT assessment sites. The localities currently served by these funds have adequate training funds remaining from the previous year’s distribution. Language requires that priority be given to rural localities in the distribution of these funds.

In addition to NAMI Virginia’s support of the above budget amendments recommended by Governor Northam, NAMI Virginia also supports the following VACSB requests:

1) $30.2M in FY22 for the Additional STEP-VA Services: STEP-VA was developed to address: Accountability, Access, Quality, and Consistency across all CSBs. STEP-VA services are intended to foster wellness among individuals and prevent crises before they arise. The result would be fewer admissions to state and private hospitals, decreased emergency room visits, and reduced involvement of individuals with behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system.

2) $2.4M in FY22 for the Reimbursement Rate Increase for Behavioral Health Service Providers: These funds will increase the physician rate to 110% of the Medicare reimbursement rate.
3) $17M in FY22 for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): Stable housing is one of the greatest barriers to discharge for individuals in state psychiatric facilities. PSH funds remove that barrier and reduce state hospital census. The 2019 report on PSH shows that state hospital utilization decreased 82% for individuals in PSH. This resulted in $9.5M in savings for state hospitals. Eighty-six percent of individuals served in PSH remained stably housed.

4) $3M for the MARCUS Alert Programs and Community Care or Mobile Crisis Teams: VACSB is requesting an additional $3M to implement the 2nd round of the community care and mobile crisis team. The Governor’s introduced budget contains $3M for the first five sites to be implemented by December 1, 2021. The protocols in the MARCUS Alert legislation require a second round of five sites to be implemented by July 1, 2023. In order to meet this deadline, the $3M in additional funding will be need in FY2022. If funding is not included for development and implementation of the protocols in future sites, the money will have to be carved out of existing STEP-VA funds. STEP-VA funding was put in place prior to the additional requirements included in the MARCUS Alert legislation and should remain whole in order to meet the stated objectives of that program. The second set of 5 sites are due to be in place by July 1, 2023, so the additional funding needs to be made available in FY22 and included in the base budget to support development and implementation.