

Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA)

Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Advisory Council

Member Description

Purpose of the Advisory Council

The Federal PAIMI Act mandates that VOPA establish the PAIMI Advisory Council to:

1. Provide independent advice and recommendations to VOPA
2. Work jointly with the VOPA Governing Board of Directors in the development of policies and goals
3. Prepare and submit Council's annual report to federal funders.

The PAIMI Advisory Council is VOPA's link to the community.

- Members are based in their own community
- Members understand local attitudes and concerns
- Members offer perspectives from their community groups of important issues in Virginia
- Members evaluate VOPA's goals
- Members help VOPA remain focused on its Mission

Mission

The PAIMI Advisory Council's mission is to provide recommendations to the Governing Board of the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) on policies and goals to be implemented to assure that individuals, covered by the PAIMI Act, are free from abuse, neglect, and related rights violations.

Who We Are

The PAIMI Advisory Council is comprised of the following individuals all with a commitment to improve mental health services in Virginia

- People who received or are receiving mental health services
- Family members
- Attorneys
- Mental health professionals
- Providers of mental health services
- Members of the public knowledgeable about mental illness
- At least one member who is a parent or guardian of a minor child who received or is receiving mental health services

Continuing efforts shall be made to include members of racial and ethnic minorities that are representative of the geographic diversity of Virginia.

What We Do

The PAIMI Advisory Council members' role is

SUPPORT: Be familiar with the purpose, philosophy and activities of the PAIMI program and to positively represent the program to the community.

ADVISE: Provide independent advice and recommendations for PAIMI programs

LEADERSHIP: Work jointly with VOPA staff and VOPA Board of Directors to develop effective policies and procedures

GUIDANCE: Submit section of the annual Program Performance Report

Typical Duties and Expectations of Advisory Council Members

- To physically attend and actively participate in all scheduled PAIMI Advisory Council meetings. Currently the PAIMI Advisory Council meets four times a year. The PAIMI Advisory Council announces an annual calendar of meetings in advance.
- To read, review and comment on materials mailed prior to each meeting for consideration at Advisory Council meetings
- To promote information on the PAIMI Advisory Council; its position and publications when meeting other groups involved with mental illness
- To provide advice, input, observations, and suggestions regarding VOPA's operations, activities, goals and objectives with regards to PAIMI
- Council members have the opportunity to participate in Board committees as full voting members. Council members that serve on a Board committee should be committed to participation at the committee meetings.

Benefits of being an Advisory Council member

- Member and contributor of decision-making groups
- Opportunity to highlight programs that you support
- On-the-job-training of political, administrative, technical and bureaucratic aspects of decision-making
- Public speaking experience
- Cultivate contacts
- Potential source of alternate or advanced employment

Reimbursement for Expenses

PAIMI Advisory Council members volunteer their time they spend on Advisory Council activities. However, members are reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses such as travel to and from meetings.

Accommodations

The PAIMI Advisory Council will meet in accessible locations. The PAIMI Advisory Council can accommodate requests for reasonable accommodations. Please contact VOPA staff for accommodations requests.