Dear Partners and Providers,

Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute (SWVMHI) in Marion currently has 14 patients who have tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, eight staff members are known to be positive at this time, and are away from SWVMHI isolating and receiving treatment as needed. SWVMHI has isolated existing positive patient cases and is further cohorting patients and staff to limit the opportunity for further spread of the virus. DBHDS has been working closely with VDH to implement infection control measures to limit continued spread of COVID-19 to contain the positive cases. **Taking into consideration the recommendations from VDH, I am directing that admissions be ceased temporarily to SWVMHI until further notice to ensure safety of existing patients and staff.**

DBHDS is working with VDH to conduct a second Point Prevalence Survey (PPS) testing of all current patients and staff on the affected unit as soon as possible and rapidly process the results. Testing will begin today, November 3, and continue on Wednesday, November 4. DBHDS will be working closely with VDH to develop a plan to reopen SWVMHI as soon as it is deemed safe to do so.

Since March, SWVMHI has been aggressively fighting COVID-19 along with the 11 other DBHDS facilities. Visitation at all DBHDS facilities, including SWVMHI, has been restricted since March, all staff and patients are screened daily for symptoms, expanded infection control measures are firmly in place, and positive and potentially positive cases are immediately quarantined. I am deeply grateful for the persistence and skill of DBHDS staff across Virginia who continue to work hard to keep patients and staff safe.

We will continue to work in partnership with VDH, Virginia's CSBs, VHHA, law enforcement, community providers and other critical stakeholders as we implement strategies to prevent further COVID-19 exposures and safely divert admissions. Thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,
Alison

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