



# June 2021 Board Retreat: Report Summary

June 2021

*Prepared by the:*  
**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GROUP**  
L. DOUGLAS WILDER SCHOOL OF  
GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
**VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY**



**VCU**

Performance Management Group  
L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

## Executive Summary

Michael Cook, Chair of the **Virginia Board of Medical Assistance Services (BMAS)**, initiated a full day board retreat for the board members to get to know one another and think strategically about their role and goals for the upcoming several years. Craig Markva, Manager of the Office of Constituent and Legislative Affairs at the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** contacted the **Performance Management Group (PMG)** within VCU's L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs regarding assistance with planning and guiding the retreat. To support this request, PMG facilitated a full-day session with BMAS Board Members and the Executive Director and Deputy Director for Administration of DMAS. The retreat discussion focused on the role of BMAS and its alignment with DMAS goals and objectives. A new subcommittee structure for the Board was also proposed with potential subcommittee functions and focus areas explored. This report presents a summary of retreat activities, discussion themes and agreed upon recommendations for both BMAS Members and DMAS Leadership.

## Retreat Information

Board of Medical Assistance Services Retreat  
9am – 3:30pm  
June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021  
600 Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(Open remotely to the public)

## BMAS Members

Eight of the eleven BMAS Members attended this retreat, with one of the members participating virtually from a remote location.

**Michael H. Cook, Esq. (Chair) - Present**  
Member of the General Public  
(Non-Health Care Provider)

Member of the Public  
(Non-Health Care Provider)  
\*Participated virtually from remote location

**Kannan Srinivasan (V. Chair) – Present\***

**Raziuddin Ali, MD - Present**  
Health Care Provider

**Maureen Hollowell - Present**  
Health Care Provider

**Ashley A. Gray – Present**  
Member of the General Public  
(Non-Health Care Provider)

**Elizabeth Noriega - Present**  
Member of the General Public  
(Non-Health Care Provider)

**Elizabeth M. Coulter - Present**  
Member of the General Public  
(Non-Health Care Provider)

**Ira G. Peters - Present**  
Health Care Provider

**Peter Reid Kongstvedt, MD - Absent**  
Member of the General Public  
(Non-Health Care Provider)

**Alexis Yolanda Edwards – Absent**  
Health Care Provider

**Patricia Taylor Cook, MD - Absent**  
Health Care Provider

Also present were:

**Brooke Barlow,**  
(Board Secretary) and DMAS Public Relations Coordinator

**Karen Kimsey, MSW**  
Director, DMAS

**Sarah Hatton, MSW**  
Director of Administration, DMAS

**James Burke, PhD,**  
Director, PMG

**Linda Pierce, MBA**  
Associate Director, PMG

**Sarah Delaney**  
Wilder School Fellow, PMG

## Retreat Agenda

The retreat agenda was prepared collaboratively by Chair Michael Cook and PMG facilitators Dr. James M. Burke and Linda Pierce.

9:00	Welcome, Introductions by Board Members
10:15	Break
10:30	The Role of Board of Medical Assistance Services and its Members <i>Making a Difference and Finding Purpose as a Board Member</i>
12:00	Lunch
1:00	DMAS and BMAS: Developing Shared Expectations Committee and Advisory Group Structure Discussion Business Meeting: Discussion of Potential By-Law Amendment Regarding Remote Participation Under Limited Circumstances
2:30	Break
2:45	Developing a Board Culture: Identifying and Living the Values as a Team
4:00	Adjourn

## Introduction

To both establish and reinforce a set of shared values, the retreat began with introductions that focused on personal backgrounds and experiences related to health care access. All participants were asked to describe their “why” for supporting the DMAS mission. A joint passion for health care access and a dedication to serving the most vulnerable populations emerged as underlying themes, underscoring the Board’s commitment to DMAS and the people they serve. More importantly, these stories helped set the tone for an inspiring session driven by the will to serve in partnership. Following introductions, Board members and DMAS leaders engaged in a rich discussion about the current roles, future directions, and overall structure of BMAS. This report summary reflects the underlying themes and recommendations captured from this retreat. Furthermore, this document may help guide BMAS members as they continue working in partnership with DMAS to improve the health and well-being of Virginians through access to high-quality care and services.

## Opening Remarks

Before addressing the proposed agenda items, the BMAS Chair, Michael Cook, posed a central question for members to consider— *does the group aim to function as a policy or advisory board?* The Chair also encouraged members to reflect on potential opportunities and strategies for working more effectively with DMAS leaders and staff, as well as ways in which they may deepen their service. Team building among members and increasing overall impact were also highlighted as primary goals of this retreat.

## Discussion Summary

### BMAS Role

Following introductions and opening remarks from the BMAS Chair, members were asked to think about how the Board can more fully support DMAS goals and objectives moving forward. To ensure high levels engagement, a rich quality of discussion, and equal opportunity for all members to participate, PMG facilitators divided participants into the following break-out groups:

Group 1: Elizabeth Coulter, Maureen Hollowell, Greg Peters, and Kannan Srinivasan

Group 2: Michael Cook, Elizabeth Noriega, Raziuddin Ali, and Ashley Gray

Each break-out group was given approximately fifteen minutes to reflect on the Board-Department partnership and identify strategies for creating better alignment of BMAS and DMAS goals. Members then reconvened to present a summary of their discussion to the larger group.

### Group 1 Summary

Members expressed a desire to increase their involvement in policy work by helping with planning, advocacy and implementation of federal and state initiatives. Although the Board receives frequent updates on emerging health care regulations, members felt that more opportunities for dialogue around evolving policies would be beneficial. Receiving pertinent information—such as reports from DMAS staff on specific initiatives of concern—ahead of Board meetings could

help members develop a better understanding of the long-term strategic plans and focus areas of DMAS. It was noted that this was especially true for any regulatory policies enforced by the State Commission Corporation.

To increase involvement, members proposed that the Board designate a small group of representatives to meet with DMAS staff in-between regularly scheduled meetings. This model would allow for updates on key topics and agency priorities to be shared and then reported out at the following Board meeting. This suggestion initiated a larger discussion on proposed work groups, where members could organize in teams to provide greater support to specific DMAS policy areas. (The Developmental Disability Waiver was cited as one example.) It was determined that an established method for sharing key issues, as well as DMAS strategies and approaches, would be needed.

### Group 2 Summary

The second group asked DMAS leaders where they could be of more assistance in supporting department goals. More specifically, members wanted to know how they could more constructively add their abilities and skill sets to ongoing initiatives. Regarding policy and planning, there was agreement that a better understanding of department priorities was required to support regulations.

Members identified the following needs:

- Regulatory calendar and anticipated timeframes for decision making so the appropriate member(s) can contribute their skills to specific issues as they arise.
- Mechanism for exploring policy topics on a deeper level (i.e., work groups or subcommittees in addition to special sessions).
- Budget summary or document that identifies department priorities, enabling members to provide targeted and timely assistance and input.
- List of DMAS Committee meeting dates and details received in advance of their convening, so that members interested in attending have time to plan and prepare.

Overall, both groups emphasized a shared desire to be of greater service in executing department priorities related to transformational aspects of the agency’s work. There was agreement that establishing better communication pathways—either through subcommittees or special sessions—would allow members to provide more timely contributions to DMAS outside of quarterly scheduled meetings.

### DMAS Leaders

Karen Kimsey, DMAS Director, and Sarah Hatton, DMAS Deputy Director, Administration, extended their appreciation to each member for their passion and enthusiasm to serve. They explained that DMAS is working on five key priority areas and welcomed the Board’s expertise in advancing their supporting goals. For example, rate setting, payment drives, and product is one area where Director Kimsey felt the Board could be especially helpful.

### **DMAS Committee Meetings**

Members reported experiencing challenges while using the online registration page for Townhall events and DMAS Committee meetings. After some discussion, it was determined that a calendar of committee meetings would be sent out to the Board separate from the virtual calendar posted on the agency website. Moving forward, any members interested in attending committee meetings will inform Director Kimsey and her team two-weeks prior to the meeting date. Once DMAS is notified, DMAS staff will ensure members are properly registered for any event and that all relevant materials and briefings are forwarded ahead of the meeting. The BMAS Secretary also shared a power-point with the most current DMAS Committees list (See Appendix A).

### **Proposals for Board Committee Structures**

During the latter session of the retreat, members spent the remainder of the retreat re-evaluating the existing Board structure and exploring the potential for subcommittees. Members requested that the topic of Board Committee Structure be discussed among the entire group, as opposed to two separate break-out groups, due to the small number in attendance.

There was unanimous agreement among members that the Board would benefit from establishing subcommittee groups. This new structural model would serve two specific purposes: 1) enable members to provide targeted, high-level support to DMAS in identified priority areas and 2) help establish better communication pathways between DMAS staff and BMAS members. It was determined that subcommittees would meet with designated DMAS teams and staff, depending on topic area, outside of quarterly Board meetings. However, several members expressed concern that the addition of subcommittees may test the Board's ability to comply with federal requirements for gubernatorial boards, as established by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The issue of submitting a request for exemption to FOIA rules requiring in-person meetings is discussed in the following section.

## Dissenting Opinions

### FOIA Exemption Request

For DMAS to fulfill its critical mission to the public, it is imperative that Board members continue to represent the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs of the people accessing DMAS programs and services. For this reason, many members reside in different regions throughout the Commonwealth. While long travel times are manageable on a quarterly basis to attend Board meetings, the addition of subcommittee meetings may cause some strain on members traveling from outside the Richmond area. It was agreed that virtual subcommittee meetings would be in the overall interest of the Board's members and their work. However, one member was opposed to requesting the FOIA Exemption needed to require virtual meetings following Governor Northam's lifting of the state emergency order (active June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021). The Chair and other members acknowledged and thanked this member for sharing this opinion but left open that option. After much discussion and consultation from Davis Creef, legal counsel of the Assistant Attorney General Office, it was determined that subcommittee meetings will need to be held in-person until further notice.

### BMAS Subcommittee Areas

Members initially proposed three subcommittee groups to focus on the following three areas:

- 1) Strategic Planning and Policy



- 2) Community Engagement and Learning
- 3) Emerging Issues Committee

DMAS Leaders expressed their full support for Board Subcommittee groups. However, they did not feel there was a need for both a Strategic Planning and Policy Committee and Emerging Issues Committee. As the majority of DMAS policies are driven by and aligned with General Assembly initiatives, it was determined that the Board can still achieve their goals with two subcommittees. Furthermore, with respect to DMAS capacity and the relatively small BMAS membership, everyone agreed that two subcommittees are appropriate. Therefore, it was agreed that emerging issues could be encompassed within a strategic planning and subcommittee.

## Recommendations to DMAS Leadership

**BMAS members made the following recommendations for DMAS:**

- Support the appropriate DMAS staff(s) in attending the September 2021 BMAS Meeting to present information on DMAS Committees that includes points of contact, current activities, and focus areas.
- Share any relevant budget documents, such as fiscal impact statements and/or expenditure summaries, with BMAS members to support their learning about department priorities.
- Distribute an annual or quarterly calendar of DMAS Committee meetings to all BMAS members and assist members desiring to attend through event registration and forwarding of materials.
- Share information with BMAS Members on their 5 key focus areas and where their skillsets or expertise may be beneficial in meeting goals.

## Recommendations to BMAS Members

**BMAS members, in partnership with DMAS Leaders, made the following recommendations for BMAS:**

- Form the following two subcommittees to deepen the contributions of each member and provide more timely support to DMAS:

1. Community Engagement and Learning  
(Interested Members)
  - Elizabeth Noriega
  - Raziuddin Ali
  - Elizabeth Coulter
  - Michael Cook – to provide dual support
2. Policy and Strategic Planning  
(Interested Members)
  - Ashley Gray
  - Maureen Hollowell
  - Greg Peters
  - Kannan Srinivasan
  - Michael Cook – to provide dual support

- Each BMAS member attends a minimum of one meeting for one or several of DMAS Committees to learn more about their activities and where their skill sets may be of service.
- Extend September BMAS Meeting to incorporate subcommittees:
  - **September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021: BMAS Meeting Schedule**  
**10:00 – 11:30 am:** Subcommittees meet independently, discuss roles, plan, and communication.  
**11:30 – 12:00 pm:** Subcommittees report back to BMAS group  
**12:00 pm – 2:00 pm:** Full Board meeting

## Closing Remarks

### DMAS Leadership

Director Kimsey thanked members for their eagerness and reinforced the importance of their partnership. She acknowledged that the past year's COVID response work had placed added strain on DMAS Staff, leading to delays in reports sent to members. Additionally, while the department was proud to implement the historic expansion of Medicaid, this success has led to more initiatives that have increased workload. Yet she reassured the Board that DMAS staff has the capacity to submit information in advance and thanked members for their understanding. Furthermore, Director Kimsey is willing to revisit DMAS strategies, goals, and

values with the Board. DMAS Leadership is also willing to work with the Board to create a subsequent strategic planning document, should this benefit the partnership. She emphasized that there are many facets and components for members to get involved in and agreed that subgroups will support DMAS work and mission.

### BMAS Members

PMG facilitators closed the meeting by asking participants to share what they thought went well throughout the retreat. The follow is a list of responses from members:

- Identified shared agreement and core values.
- Members felt heard and valued.
- Strong team driven by common goals and passion.
- Joint commitment to service shows a true partnership.
- Members feel moved to action.
- Excitement about outcome of subcommittees.
- Sharing stories helped personalize members.
- Team building goal accomplished.
- Gratitude and praise for Karen's leadership and the contributions of DMAS staff.

## Agenda Items for September BMAS Meeting

- Subcommittee communication with DMAS staff:
  - Frequency, timing, and format(s). Communication for the subcommittees and when, in what format?
- BMAS Subcommittee roles:
  - Points of contact, next steps, meeting availability

## Appendix A: DMAS Department Committees

In addition to participation in Department workgroups or committees pursuant to Section 5.3 of the Board's Bylaws, Board members are encouraged to attend meetings of any committee of the Department with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:

- Dental Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Drug Utilization Review Board (DUR)
- Managed Care Advisory Committee (MCAC)
- Medicaid Hospital Payment Policy Advisory Council (MHPPAC)
- Medicaid Physician & Managed Care Liaison Committee (MPMCLC)
- The Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee (P&T)
- Medicaid Payment Policy & Care Coordination Committee (MPPCC)
- External Financial Review Council (EFRC)
- Member Advisory Council (MAC)
- Children's Health Insurance Program Advisory Committee (CHIPAC)
- Pharmacy Liaison Committee (PLC).

DMAS staff shall provide information regarding meeting schedules to the Board to facilitate member attendance and involvement.