

## **Comments by Lisa H. Moore, Executive Director, Mount Rogers Community Services Board:**

### Impact of Closing of SWVMHI Adolescent Unit

- Large rural area (eighteen counties) will have no psychiatric treatment facility within the region for children or adolescents
- Caretakers will have to travel long distances to meet with treatment team. Resources (time, gas money) to accomplish this not available. This is likely to negatively impact outcomes of treatment.
- Difficulty in managing a child's mental health treatment likely to increase out-of-home placements, putting pressure on local Comprehensive Services costs.
- Unlikely that a private psychiatric facility could open and be available in Southwest Virginia within the two month timeframe.
- SWVMHI Adolescent Unit has seen a 19% increase in admissions and a 99% increase in bed utilization rates since FY05. Admits over 200 adolescents with over 3,000 bed days usage a year. Is current capacity in the private sector available to handle this need?
- SWVMHI Adolescent Unit offers educational and special educational services. This is not typically available in private psychiatric facilities.
- The Adolescent Unit has specialty professionals trained in Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services. Shortage statewide, but especially in Southwest Virginia. Will be a large loss for our region.
- Many youth are refused admission to private psychiatric facilities. What will be the safety net for this population and their families?
- There are no current provisions for a Community Service Board to insist on an admission to a private facility if the Board's evaluation shows the need for hospitalization. This is only one aspect of the public-private relationship that will need to be clarified. Other concerns have to do with hours of accepting admissions (crisis are rarely normal business hours) and the discharge planning protocol, which many private facilities are not yet well versed in.
- The same economic conditions that have the State looking for cost-cutting measures, will also impact all of Virginia's population. Historically economic stress increases utilization of mental health services. This is not the year to eliminate important safety nets of child psychiatric facilities.