

Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority Announces its First Grant *Washington County Awarded \$115,970 to Open a Treatment Center for Women*

April 10, 2023 – The Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) has made its first-ever grant award, providing \$115,970 to Washington County for a new treatment center for women. Located near downtown Abingdon, the Mended Women Lifestyle Recovery Center will be a 54-bed facility providing post-detox and early recovery services for women from 13 counties and three cities in far southwestern Virginia.

Senator Todd Pillion, Chairman of the Authority, called the award “a great start” and noted there are no other such facilities for women within 150 miles. “We are so pleased that Washington County and its partners are addressing such a significant gap,” he said. “And once again a community in Southwest Virginia is setting the standard for the rest of the state by being the first in Virginia to successfully apply for and receive one of these grants.”

The project is a collaboration between Washington County and Fairview Housing Management Corporation, a long standing non-profit that provides residential substance use treatment and recovery housing in Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee. Modeled on American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria and Fairview's existing Bristol Lifestyle Recovery campus for adult males, the new program will employ evidence-based practices to produce optimal results for individuals struggling with opioid and substance use disorders.

Dr. Sarah Melton, who chairs the OAA’s Grants Committee, praised Washington County for its collaborative approach in the project. “They brought so many partners together from the community as part of this application, and when you see this kind of collaboration it provides confidence that these funds are being put to the best possible use,” she said.

The Opioid Abatement Authority received its first influx of settlement funds last year after Attorney General Jason Miyares finalized settlements worth more than \$500 million for the Commonwealth spread over the course of eighteen years. According to Miyares the total amount of settlement funds could potentially double as additional settlements are finalized. “Every community in Virginia has been impacted by the opioid crisis,” said Miyares, “and my office will continue to demand accountability from those who profited.”

In addition to the funds awarded to Washington County by the OAA, the county also contributed \$200,000 in funding that it received directly from the settlements. The Wellspring Foundation provided another \$200,000 in support, and Smyth County committed \$24,072 from its direct settlement funds. Additional financial support was provided by The Genan Foundation, the Vanguard Charitable Fund, Emory United Methodist Church, Abingdon Baptist Church, and private donors.

The Opioid Abatement Authority was created by the General Assembly in 2021 to abate and remediate the opioid epidemic in the Commonwealth through grants, donations, or other assistance, for efforts to treat, prevent, and reduce opioid use disorder and the misuse of opioids in the Commonwealth.

For more information contact info@voaa.us