

From: Marjorie Green

Subject: Proposed Behavioral Health Docket: Please delay application to VA Supreme Court

Dear Ms. Friedman:

As an Arlington resident with family members who have mental health challenges, I write to urge you to delay the application for approval of an Arlington Behavioral Health Docket to give those who are likely to be the most impacted sufficient time to review the proposal and understand it.

First, I want to express my deep appreciation for efforts by the Department of Human Services and Judge O'Brien and her colleagues on the General District Court to try to help ensure mental health treatment for those in the community who need it.

However, I attended the July 17th Q&A session and left without understanding the urgency with which County and court officials seem to believe they must act on this Behavioral Health Docket. I understand and appreciate that Judge O'Brien and DHS officials have been working for at least five years now on interventions across the spectrum for those with mental health challenges. Judging from my own experience, though, the work on a Behavioral Health Docket and details of the plan were known to very, very few in the community. Like many I've spoken with, I learned about the details only this month.

I and other family members will be key to ensuring that our loved ones successfully comply with the requirements of a new Behavioral Health Docket. Thus, it seems counterproductive to move forward so rapidly, without giving us time to review, discuss, and thoroughly understand the implications of implementing this post-plea docket vs. a pre-plea docket, among other key components. I am open to learning more, but I apparently will not be given the time to do so.

Likewise, I find it dispiriting that the application is being moved so quickly when in less than six months we will have a new Commonwealth's Attorney who will be key to implementing the new docket. Why would we move ahead now, without the input of the new CA?

Arlington has a long history of going to great lengths to involve members of the community in changes that affect them. The inexplicable rush to get this

Behavioral Health Docket approved runs contrary to that tradition. It does not reflect positively on Arlington County.

I urge you to slow down this application process and to offer the public more time to understand and discuss the specifics of a new Behavioral Health Docket.

Thank you,

Marjorie Green

cc: Members of the Arlington County Board
Sen. Barbara Favola
County Manager Mark Schwartz