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# Committee Resolutions

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## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Continued on Page 2

### HHS-2009-02: FY 2010 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PLANNING

**1. WHEREAS, in planning for Fiscal Year 2010**, the citizens of Fairfax County and their elected Board of Supervisors (BOS) are now facing an unprecedented decline in projected revenue, and difficult choices, in order to sustain the essential public services that we want provided locally;

**2. WHEREAS these services**, built with fervent public support countywide and significant County investments—particularly in public education and public safety, and in the public and private network of health and human services—are widely understood to be critical to our community's well-being and essential to our quality of life;

**3. WHEREAS citizens** in the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) participate in the annual public review of the County Executive's *Advertised Budget Plan*, acknowledge the effort and dedication of County employees at every level who have worked to achieve a new standard of communication and transparency in this year's public planning process, and recognize particular value in the tools provided to make critical decisions:

*Key information compiled and communicated*, early in the planning process, in "Lines of Business" description of core mission and strategic choices that deliver essential services cost-effectively;

*Transparency*, in required 15% "Reduction Options," that elicited opportunities for both revenue enhancement and cost-savings, but also revealed severe damage that some proposed reductions will inflict in core services, particularly in agencies that require highly trained personnel and are already lean and well-managed;

*Careful fiscal balance*, through both revenue enhancements and cost-reductions, in an Advertised Plan that proposes (at a new rate of \$1.04 per \$100 valuation) to equalize the average home owner's tax bill with roughly the amount paid last year; and

*Truth in Rate Advertising*, expressed in the *Citizen's Guide*, in which the County Executive itemized significant "reductions in services" proposed in order to level the tax rate at \$1.04 and recommended the Board of Supervisors advertise a maximum rate of \$1.07 (3 additional Rate Pennies), to provide "flexibility" for public review, so that citizens may voice their desire to mitigate the impact of extensive reductions in services;

**4. WHEREAS the MVCCA has examined the County Executive's choices** among service reductions across many agencies, finds a group of proposed reductions that appear to have particularly severe and long-lasting impact on the health and human services network, recommends full restoration of these critical services, and estimates that damage to these essential services may be mitigated through taxpayer support for further revenue enhancement totaling \$11.73 million, a sum roughly equivalent to half of one additional Rate Penny above the proposed \$1.04 Rate;

**5. WHEREAS the MVCCA, in preparing our itemized list of "FY 2010 Recommendations to Restore Critical Health and Human Services"** (an attachment to this Resolution), offers the

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following considerations, concerning the County's role in sustaining this service network:

*Evolving community partnerships:* The health and human services network in Fairfax County has developed from earlier successful investments in public and private partnerships and thrives on integration of public and private resources to provide the continuum of high quality, effective services that enjoy strong public support countywide;

*County Initiatives:* In the past decade, complex demographic growth (including greater cultural diversity, aging, and growing numbers of those with disabilities) combined with a decline in non-County governmental resources to drive both public and private agencies toward innovative approaches to partnership, service integration, and "redesign"—strategies that are achieving success, year by year, in serving more people better and more cost-effectively. Meanwhile, other Initiatives—involving participation of numerous citizen task forces, boards and commissions as well as elected Supervisors—responded to emergent crises such as domestic violence and youth at risk for gang recruitment and substance abuse; and some provide the blueprint for more efficient and strategic responses, among them, The Affordable Housing Preservation Initiative (since 2004), the Fifty-Plus Action Plan that anticipates demographic aging (2007), The Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community (2008), and The Josiah H. Beeman Commission Report (2008) that recommends transformation in the public mental health system.

*Strategic leadership capacity:* The County's indispensable role has become a complex of leadership responsibilities that support service integration and better use of available resources all across the system, by managing existing programs well, by supporting the research and analysis that opens a window on the multiple causes of community crises, and by supporting efforts to design evidence-based and more effective approaches to prevention and earlier intervention.

**6. WHEREAS the MVCCA recommends restoration of many proposed reductions in services** previously categorized as "Severe" in impact by the Fairfax County Human Services Council (Letter to the BOS, Dec. 18, 2008); and **whereas** MVCCA requests special consideration for these and additional reduced or eliminated programs that are resources of especially great value in a time of crisis and rising demand for services; **whereas** these services are well worth restoring because they prevent or break into a destructive and costly downward spiral and instead open paths to personal, social, and economic recovery for individuals, families, and neighborhoods:

*Early childhood education combined with safe childcare*, made affordable for 500 low-income working families through vouchers and sliding scale fees (MVCCA first expressed support in 2006, but each year the County reduces spending, despite the program's success—building skills in children, self-sufficiency in families, and progress in neighborhood schools);

*Effective prevention programs*, such as Leadership and Resilience Training in high schools, After School programs in middle schools, Gum Springs Headstart and Groveton Senior Center, the Annandale Adult Day Health Center, Lorton and other Senior Plus

health programs, and after school Computer Learning Center sites, all community resources that benefit vulnerable, at-risk groups;

*Crisis intervention programs*, such as the Supervised Visitation and Exchange program and all Family Counseling and services in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court;

*Mental health treatment*, restoring lives in the Residential Treatment Program for Women with co-occurring disorders and providing critical services in the Adult Detention Center for many young adults who are otherwise not even stabilized when they are released from jail;

*Strategic management and research capacity*, administering programs and partnerships well and also providing (for example, through Systems Management positions) support to the internet-based Human Services Resource Guide and to specialized research for service redesign and integration efforts underway, at a time when evidence-based model programs and cross-agency strategies are in demand throughout the public/private network;

**7. WHEREAS**, in FY2010 and the foreseeable near future, Fairfax County will continue to face the challenge of increasing public needs as well as mandates for many public services, coupled with continuing risk of falling revenues, and **whereas** County leadership and investments in the health and human services network now build upon and seek to improve the efficiency of prevention and interventional strategies that offer our best hope of effective response to emergent community crises,

**A. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations recommends the Board of Supervisors act this year, in two ways, in order to enhance revenues and sustain public services and resources needed throughout Fiscal Year 2010 and subsequent years:

First, after full consideration in public hearings, adjust the *Advertised Budget Plan* to restore proposed Reductions that threaten severe and long-term damage to essential services, including those listed (and hereby attached) as "MVCCA Recommendations to Restore Critical Health and Human Services."

Second, adopt new tax rates and revenue enhancements that will provide County revenue sufficient to avert unacceptable damage to essential public services, including those provided in the health and human services network, so that the County will retain and continue to strengthen its capacity to manage and respond effectively to emergent community crises.

**The Attachment to Resolution HHS-2009-02, "MVCCA Recommendations to Restore Critical Health and Human Services," is available on the MVCCA website ([www.mvcca.org](http://www.mvcca.org)) under March Record.**