



Today's Date: August 18, 2026

Release Date: IMMEDIATE

Ryan Weeks
*Director of Communications
& Community Engagement*
(434) 426-1186
Ryan.Weaks@HorizonBH.org

\$4 Million School-Based Behavioral Health Services Expansion in Central Virginia

Central VA – Horizon Behavioral Health has been awarded \$4,000,000 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand school-based behavioral health services for elementary, middle, and high school students enrolled in the public school divisions across the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, and the City of Lynchburg.

The program is designated to serve children, youth, and young adults, ages 5–21, with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) or those at risk for developing SED. Services are intended to support youth experiencing conditions that may include depression, anxiety disorders, trauma-related disorders, behavioral disorders, early psychosis, or co-occurring substance use disorders. The goal of the program is to expand access, improve care coordination, and increase the proportion of youth successfully connected to services.

“Every child deserves the opportunity to succeed, and that starts with making sure they have access to the support they need when they need it,” said Melissa Lucy, Chief Executive Officer at Horizon Behavioral Health. “This investment allows Horizon to bring more behavioral health services closer to where young people live, learn, and grow, while strengthening our partnership with local schools and families. We are proud to expand this work across Central Virginia and help build a stronger foundation for the next generation.”

Over the four-year duration of the grant, the program is slated to provide care coordination to approximately 1,095 students and mental health services to 1,425 students paired with increased access to behavioral screenings, outreach, and use of evidence-based therapeutic practices to address the diverse and complex needs of youth diagnosed with SED, including those with trauma exposure, co-occurring substance use, and early psychosis.

“Investing in the health and wellbeing of today’s youth is strengthening the future of our entire community. We are very pleased to receive support from SAMHSA to expand the system of care for youth behavioral health in such a way that every student has the tools and support to achieve greatness. It is a tremendous honor to serve alongside our committed public school system partners to see this expansion come to fruition,” said Lesli Sedwick, LPC, Director School Based Services at Horizon Behavioral Health.

Horizon Behavioral Health was awarded this highly competitive grant among only 21 other organizations across the United States. The expansion is expected to begin in tandem with the 2026-2027 academic school year.

###

Horizon Behavioral Health has been the primary public behavioral healthcare provider in Central Virginia for more than 58 years. In the last year, Horizon provided services to over 12,000 adults and children, supporting individuals with mental illness, substance use disorder and intellectual disabilities. Horizon is accredited by CARF International. This represents the highest level of accreditation that can be given to a behavioral health organization. To learn more about Horizon, please visit HorizonBH.org.