



**Ashley Harrell, LCSW, Posthumously – Virginia**

Behavioral Health Senior Advisor for Addiction and Recovery Treatment Services - Department of Medical Assistance Services

Ashley Harrell spent 25 years dedicated to people in need, especially those with substance use disorders (SUD) and more specifically opioid use disorder (OUD). Her position at the state level forever changed the regulatory landscape for Virginia treatment providers and support services through her work to transform Medicaid coverage for SUD into the Addiction and Recovery Treatment Services (ARTS) Benefits program. Ms. Harrell aided in the development of Section 1115 of the Social Security Act, Demonstration Waiver Application to require ARTS Benefits to cover a full continuum of care. She championed all aspects of support services including Certified Peer Recovery Specialists, for whom she successfully advocated within the system to double the Medicaid rate for their services. Virginia's ARTS Benefits have been recognized nationally as the model for states implementing SUD Demonstration Waivers.

Ms. Harrell led in the development of Virginia's SUPPORT Act Grant applications that addressed treatment and workforce capacity issues. Even more noteworthy is Ms. Harrell's responsiveness to the needs of opioid treatment providers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was during this period that she exhibited her commitment to opioid services and her desire to understand the challenges Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) faced, with her quick response to the needs of service providers. She created and implemented billing codes for additional take-home doses for patients and utilized her position to address transportation barriers by coordinating between transportation companies and OTPs to expand access and support the individuals served and the treatment provided. Ms. Harrell is beloved and respected by her peers, treatment providers, patients and the entire state. She is looked upon with respect and gratitude for her selfless service and passion for advocating for access to treatment and support services.