

Mental health care uneven for children

Tuesday May 3, 2011 **RICHMOND** — Virginia's mental health services for children are uneven, and no one can say if they really help young people, a new study by children's advocacy group says.

Information about children with mental illness, the services they receive and the outcomes of their care are extremely fragmented and in some cases may be inaccurate, said Voices for Virginia's Children.

"There is ... no systematic effort currently in place to determine whether children receiving mental health treatment across various systems are achieving positive outcomes," Voices said.

Voices said no community in the state offers all of the 39 specific services the state says local mental health agencies could provide, and four-fifths of the state's community services boards offer fewer than half of those services.

Five offer fewer than 10. The Valley Community Services Board offers 11, and the Rockbridge Area Community Services Board offers 12, Voices said.