

***FINAL* Mental Health Task Force Recommendations**

Supplemental Budget

1. Recommend the Governor-Elect and the Legislature maintain current mental health services and funding levels through the end of the current biennium and a separate supplemental budget for community mental health services be introduced and passed on an expedited basis. DSHS should front-load current state-only dollars available through 2005 to be available for January expenditure, if necessary, for immediate backfill so that RSNs will not have to discontinue services.

2005-07 Biennial Budget

1. Recommend that the lost federal funds are replaced with state-only funds, to the maximum extent possible, with conditions to be determined by the Legislature.
2. If additional state funding is made available, it should be used to address: (1) the lack of community residential and psychiatric inpatient beds as documented by the PCG report, (2) retaining existing community hospital and Children's Long Term Inpatient (CLIP) beds, and (3) meeting the need for forensic evaluations and beds.

Policy Changes

1. The Department of Social and Health Services should not close State Hospital beds until additional residential capacity is added in the community.
2. The Department of Social and Health Services should suspend, rather than terminate eligibility for Medicaid when an otherwise eligible person is confined in a correctional facility or is a resident of a state hospital. In addition, the Department of Social and Health Services should expedite Medicaid applications for persons with a mental illness being discharged from a state hospital or released from a correctional facility.
3. The Legislature should amend chapter 71.24 RCW to provide greater direction to RSNs regarding how state-only dollars will be used for non-Medicaid services and priority populations.
4. The Legislature should enact legislation authorizing the use of mental health courts state-wide.
5. The Department of Social and Health Services and Regional Support Networks should develop contingency plans for the potential loss of some or all of the state-only backfill for the 2005-07 biennium.
6. The Department of Social and Health Services and Regional Support Networks should seek additional federal and private grant funds to support eligible programs.
7. The legislature should amend chapter 71.24 RCW to require the use of evidence-based practice in the treatment of mental illness and promote recovery from mental illnesses.
8. The legislature should continue the Joint Legislative and Executive Task Force on Mental Health Services and Financing into the 2005-07 biennium.