

Jail Transition Services

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6032; Section 213(5)(k); Chapter 299;
Laws of 2018

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Jail Transition Services

Washington State
Health Care Authority

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Executive Summary

The Health Care Authority (HCA) is submitting this legislative report in response to Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6032 (2018), which funds jail-based mental health services for mentally ill offenders confined in a county or city jail and assistance in accessing services upon release. The proviso provides for:

“\$2,291,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2019 is provided solely for mental health services for mentally ill offenders while confined in a county or city jail and for facilitating access to programs that offer mental health services upon release from confinement. The authority must collect information from the behavioral health organizations on their plan for using these funds, the numbers of individuals served, and the types of services provided and submit a report to the office of financial management and the appropriate fiscal committees of the legislature by December 1st of each year of the biennium.”

The Behavioral Health Organizations (BHO), along with the Southwest and North Central Integrated Managed Care (IMC) regions, contract for jail-based services with their provider networks. From July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, over 11,000 individuals received over 44,000 service encounters.

The BHOs and IMC regions provide incarcerated individuals with mental health evaluations, treatment, and intake; substance use disorder assessment; and pre-release services — including help applying for Apple Health and other benefits. After release, the BHOs and IMC regions help people transition back into the community by working to ensure their basic needs are met, providing job support, and coordinating primary care access.

While all are committed to serving the incarcerated and post-release populations, the BHOs and IMC regions reported common barriers. At an organizational level, these include insufficient funding and difficulty finding qualified mental health professionals to hire. At a service level, these barriers include lack of affordable and appropriate housing, jail space that can be used for treatment services, and health care access — including prescription drugs — when Apple Health coverage is suspended when people are in jail.

HCA will continue collecting data and report back to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Legislature by December 1, 2019.



Background: Jail Transition Services

Individuals experiencing incarceration often have multiple immediate needs, including behavioral and physical health issues requiring ongoing care, housing, income support, employment, and education. Accessing services to address these needs is key for individuals to successfully transition back into their communities. Many individuals experiencing serious mental illness end up incarcerated due to behavior associated with the symptoms of their illness. Jail-based services staff help link incarcerated individuals experiencing a serious mental illness with appropriate community services and to increase the likelihood of successful community reintegration.

These activities include efforts to expedite applications for new or reinstated Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) benefits and refer individuals (using “warm hand-offs,” when possible) to community mental health agencies. In some cases, the service provider or facility staff conduct the intake evaluation while the individual is still incarcerated. Services provided as part of this program are intended to facilitate safe transition into community services.

Numbers Served

For the July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 reporting period, the BHOs, including the IMC regions, reported that a total of 11,412 individuals were served through jail services. These individuals received a total of 44,859 service encounters.¹

HCA recently implemented a database tracking system for this population. Substitute Senate Bill 6430 directs the HCA to suspend — rather than terminate — medical assistance benefits for persons incarcerated or committed to a state hospital. The intent is to provide continuity of care for individuals upon re-entry into the community. With this system, we will be able to determine how many individuals had their Apple Health coverage suspended while incarcerated and when their coverage was reinstated.

Services Provided

The BHOs and Southwest and North Central IMC regions indicated that they provided (and will continue to provide) the following types of services to individuals in county and city jails:

During confinement:

- Mental health evaluation/screening
- Mental health treatment (primarily outpatient)
- Mental health intake
- Substance use disorder assessment/screening

¹ For reference, throughout a one-year period of any given time, an average of 14,000 people are incarcerated in Washington State county or city jails.

- Assistance applying for Apple Health and other publically-funded benefits
- Integrated dual disorder treatment
- Pre-release services and case management

At release and post-release:

- Providing intensive post-release outreach
- Facilitating post-incarceration access to basic needs (e.g. clothing, food, hygiene)
- Obtaining new identification upon release from custody (e.g. state identification)
- Facilitating transportation at time of release
- Coordinating access to primary health care (including dental care) upon release
- Providing post-release housing support (linking to emergency shelters, transitional housing, and giving assessments for low-income public housing)
- Providing post-release employment support
- Facilitating access to education and other job training

As of July 1, 2018, HCA contracts with all BHOs and IMC regions. The BHOs and IMC regions then contract with regional providers to develop their networks, to purchase services, and hire mental health care professionals. The majority of services provide access to intensive, short-term case management to individuals with mental health disorders who need assistance reintegrating into the community. Case management provides individuals with assistance on how to access publically-funded benefits (if eligible); housing assistance; outpatient treatment; and other services including education, training, and employment in the community.

Mental health professionals licensed through the Department of Health provide on-site mental health evaluations. The courts may receive evaluation summaries to ensure mental health professional and justice system collaboration on comprehensive discharge planning for participants being released into community care.

How Funding Will Be Used

HCA requested from each BHO and IMC region their plans for how they plan to use FY 2018 funding to implement jail services. See Appendix 1 for 2018 funding allocations by BHO and IMC.

Barriers to Services

The most common barriers for all regions are:

- Insufficient funding
- Lack of access to affordable and appropriate housing
- Lack of access to medications and medical services because a person's Apple Health enrollment is suspended while they are in jail



- Lack of specialized training for the behavioral health workforce on how to serve this population
- Insufficient jail space to provide treatment

BHO/IMC updates

The following is a description of each BHO's plan for providing jail services. Each includes the following underlying themes:

- Workforce issues; there are not enough licensed or skilled professionals to work with this population.
- Access to affordable housing; finding affordable housing in Washington is difficult.
- Lack of funding; there is not enough funding to support the needs of this population.

See Appendix 2 for a map detailing each region.

Great Rivers Behavioral Health Organization

Great Rivers BHO reports they are facing challenges obtaining a qualified workforce to serve the mentally ill offender population. The BHO will continue working to provide intake assessments and case management to incarcerated individuals and to ensure there is a linkage to community services upon release.

A jail services position develops the initial recovery/diversion plan for all assigned clients. This position also works to provide transition services between the clients and assigned case managers to ensure continuity of services for individuals in the jail.

These proviso-funded positions will continue to:

- Serve as liaisons between jails, courts, and crisis offices within the community
- Provide written reports and testimony to the courts, as required
- Assist inmates with Apple Health applications to ensure benefits are activated on release
- Provide consultation, education, and act as liaisons with law enforcement, health personnel, and other agencies and groups

Great Rivers BHO is made up of Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum counties.

Greater Columbia Behavioral Health Organization

Greater Columbia BHO will continue to contract jail services to five agencies within their provider network. The providers report insufficient staffing levels for the treatment needs of individuals who are incarcerated for longer periods of time. However, the providers will continue to provide evaluations and coordinate services to help incarcerated individuals maintain optimum health. They will focus on pre-release planning and transitional services for individuals with behavioral health needs to facilitate successful return into the community.

Additionally, the jail services staff will offer post-release outreach to help ensure follow-up with a Community Service Office for accessing benefits and getting to mental health and other appointments.

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The BHO's jail services program assists and coordinates alternative placement, as appropriate, to best meet inmates' behavioral health needs.

Greater Columbia BHO includes Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Kittitas, Klickitat, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima counties.

King County Behavioral Health Organization

King County BHO reports experiencing significant workforce shortages as the community-based provider network continues to struggle to hire and retain qualified staff. Despite these challenges, the BHO's jail services programs will continue to provide transitional and support services including mental health evaluations, case management, discharge planning, and assistance applying for Apple Health and other publically-funded benefits.

The King County BHO has several jail services programs including:

- Integrated dual disorders treatment, serving adults with co-occurring behavioral health conditions
- Mental health evaluations and services, serving adult drug diversion court participants
- Benefits application assistance, serving adults with behavioral health conditions who are transitioning to a day-reporting alternative

North Central Behavioral Health Organization

North Central BHO provided case management services until the closure of the BHO in January 2018. These services included facilitating community transition care — both before and after release of an incarcerated individual. The support services provided also assisted individuals in gaining access to housing, access to Apple Health coverage, and continued enrollment in behavioral health services.

This BHO, which has transitioned into integrated managed care, provided jail services through December 31, 2017.

North Central Integrated Managed Care Region

North Central currently contracts with Catholic Charities and Grant Integrated Services to provide jail services in their region; services started January 1, 2018. This region reports difficulty with accessing and locating affordable housing for the individuals coming out of a jail setting. Additionally, there is limited space in the jail to provide mental health services, assessments, and intake to individuals. North Central is also experiencing workforce challenges, including difficulty finding skilled and experienced licensed mental health staff.

This region has created a committee of local area representatives to develop a proposal to establish a regional team of two to three staff to provide jail services across the region.

North Central Integrated Managed Care includes Grant, Douglas and Chelan counties.



North Sound Behavioral Health Organization

North Sound BHO reports that they intend to continue purchasing services that include initial eligibility screening, mental health assessment, enrollment into ongoing post-release services, coordination with contracted agencies, provision of resources related to homelessness, behavioral health treatment, employment assistance, and follow-up interviews with inmates who reoffend without completing services.

North Sound BHO identified the need for affordable housing, additional funds to enhance and support the current programs, and a trained workforce to conduct mental health and substance use disorder assessments in the jail setting.

North Sound Behavioral Health Organization counties include Island, San Juan, Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom.

Optum/Pierce Behavioral Health Organization

Optum/Pierce BHO reports they will continue to contract for jail services to agencies within their provider network. The proviso funding supports a jail services team who continues to work on service coordination while the individual is in custody and at the time of release. There is a significant lack of affordable housing for these individuals; getting Apple Health services reactivated is also a challenge.

The providers would like to expand and enhance services but would need additional funding. However, providers will continue to work with individuals to ensure that each person has appointments for services upon release, and to work with the team to ensure a positive transition into the community. The jail staff will continue to act as liaisons with the courts and service providers to ensure all written reports are provided to the courts and necessary mental health staff.

Salish Behavioral Health Organization

The Salish BHO reports difficulty in finding qualified mental health staff to provide services to the jail population; they state that they would need additional funding to enhance and support current programs. Additional funding would help support a plan for pre-diversion and post-diversion options.

The providers would also like to increase substance use disorder treatment provisions under the jails services programs to provide screening, assessments, and residential treatment pre- and post-incarceration. The mental health staff will continue to provide intakes, screenings, rehabilitation case management, and case planning.

Salish BHO counties include Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap.

Spokane County Regional Behavioral Health Organization

Spokane County Regional BHO continues to fund 6 providers within their network for jail services. However, they find that funding for these programs is insufficient; therefore, they contribute additional state and local dollars to support the programs.



The providers report that there is limited access to medication management and access to transportation within the rural areas. The Spokane region is also experiencing licensed mental health staff workforce shortages. The provider network has committed to expanding outreach and counseling services within the jail setting to prepare individuals and provide access to services as they transition back into the community.

Spokane BHO counties include Adams, Ferry, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Orielle, Spokane, and Stevens.

Thurston/Mason Behavioral Health Organization

Thurston/Mason BHO reports that they will expand the Community Integration Outreach program to provide team-based intensive services in three categories:

- Individuals in jail with a mental illness;
- Individuals in jail ready for release and transition back to the community; and
- Individuals with mental illness who are either in the community or who are un-enrolled in institutions or other settings who are ready for discharge and are vulnerable to becoming homeless due to mental illness.

The BHO reports that there are insufficient funds to maintain these programs and not enough space to provide treatment-related services in the jail setting. There is also a workforce shortage for qualified mental health staff in this region. The BHO will continue to provide the following services: engagement, stabilization, and coordinated care for individuals as they transition back into the community.

Thurston/Mason BHO includes Thurston and Mason counties.

Southwest Region Integrated Managed Care Region

Southwest Region reports they will continue to contract for jail services to Lifeline Connections, which is part of their provider network. Lifeline plans to increase their master's level clinicians' time to provide more assessments in the jail setting. Southwest is also experiencing difficulty recruiting and retaining mental health professionals. The region also cannot find affordable housing for individuals. The region is currently working with a jail diversion workgroup, convened by the local court system, on developing services to increase diversion options for individuals with behavioral health needs.

Southwest Region includes Clark and Skamania counties.



Conclusion

HCA will continue collecting data and report back to OFM and the Legislature by December 1, 2019 on the number of individuals served and types of services provided. HCA will also measure outcomes to determine if recidivism rates are affected for individuals benefiting from this funding.

Individuals coming out of the jail system that are enrolled in Medicaid services will have an option to access supportive housing with the creation of the Foundational Community Supports (FCS) part of Washington's 5-year Medicaid transformation project providing targeted services for people in need. Supported housing services are available for Medicaid beneficiaries that meet the program criteria.

Supported employment services may be another option for Medicaid enrolled individuals that have a physical, behavioral, or long-term service need. These services include individual job coaching and training, help with employer relations and assistance with job placement.

This funding has allowed the regions to make improvements for those who are incarcerated or are transitioning back into the community. Although limitations continue to exist, each region is committed to providing the necessary services to promote the continuity of care that these individuals so desperately need. Finally, with additional financial support, the regions could build a larger skilled workforce with behavioral health training, create additional methods to help this population access medical services, and work with local housing agents on access to affordable housing once released.



Appendix 1: 2018 Jail Services Funding Allocations

2018 Jail Services Funding Allocations, by Behavioral Health Organization and Integrated Managed Care Region

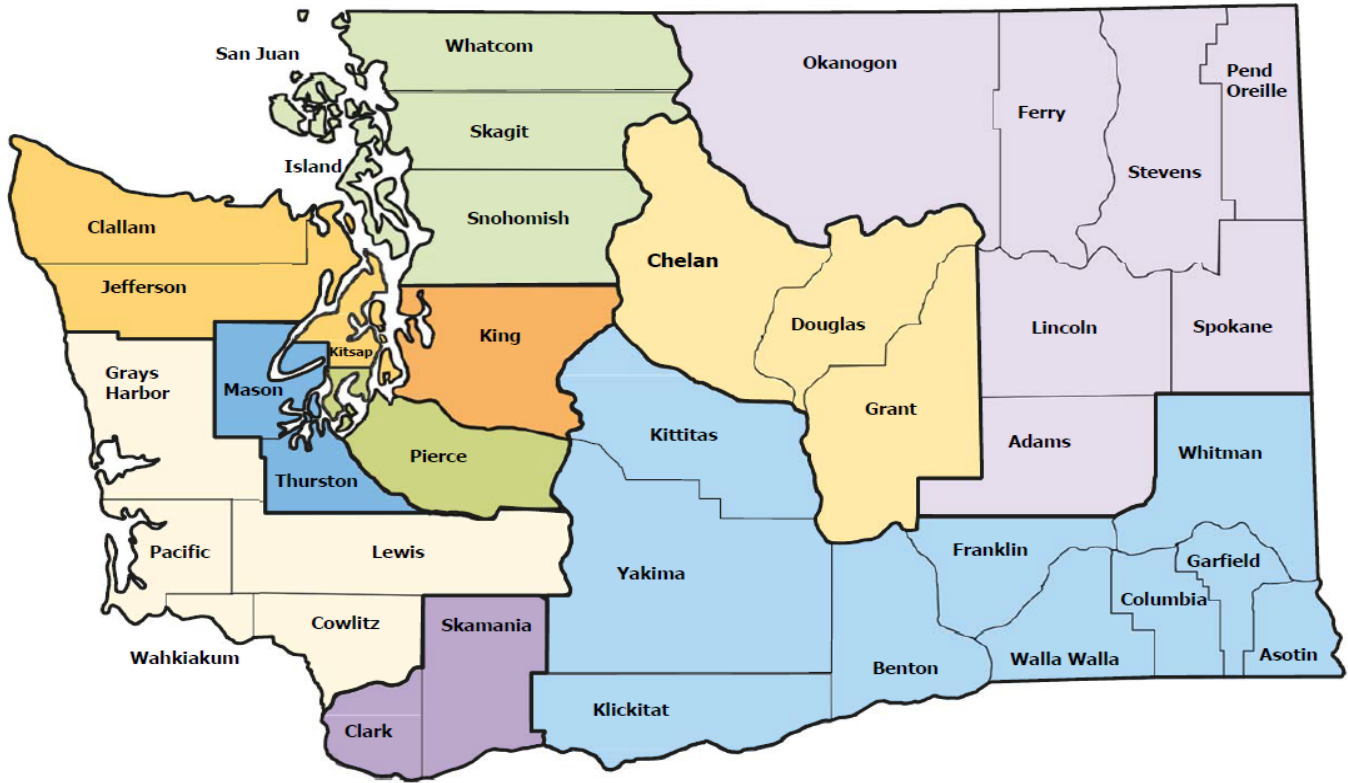
	BHOs	IMCs	FY18 Total
	Per Month	Per Quarter	
Great Rivers	8,820		105,840
Greater Columbia	23,425		281,100
King	51,840		622,080
North Central	4,386	13,158	52,632
North Sound	29,851		358,212
Optum/Pierce	21,645		259,740
Salish	9,689		116,268
Southwest		36,937	147,748
Spokane	19,757		237,084
Thurston Mason	9,191		110,292

Note: The funding distribution model is based on 70 percent of the general population (based on 2010 Office of Financial Management population data) and 30 percent of the Washington prisons, average daily population (ADP).



Appendix 2: Regional Map, Behavioral Health Organization and Integrated Managed Care

Current BHO/IMC Regional Map



- Salish BHO**
Clallam
Jefferson
Kitsap
- Thurston-Mason BHO**
Mason
Thurston
- North Sound BHO ****
Island San Juan
Snohomish
Skagit
Whatcom
- Greater Columbia BHO ****
Asotin
Benton
Columbia
Franklin
Garfield
Kittitas
Klickitat
Walla Walla
Whitman
Yakima
- Spokane County Regional BHO ****
Adams
Ferry
Lincoln
Okanogon
Pend Oreille
Spokane
Stevens
- Optum Pierce BHO ****
Pierce
- Great Rivers BHO**
Cowlitz
Grays Harbor
Lewis Pacific
Wahkiakum
- Southwest Washington IMC***
Clark
Skamania
- North Central IMC**
Chelan
Douglas
Grant

* Services in Clark and Skamania counties are managed by the Washington Health Care Authority's Apple Health plans. For more information, call 1-800-562-3022.

** Mid-adopter

