

**OptumHealth Pierce Regional Support Network Transition Plan**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

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**Q: Why is OptumHealth changing the mental health system?**

A: OptumHealth is changing the mental health system to enhance opportunities for recovery and resiliency and make more efficient use of both state and federal funds. While change is never easy, OptumHealth was hired by the state to improve services and modernize the system at a time of fiscal crisis. The state has strongly supported our proposal and the direction we are taking the system -- we are both committed to helping transform the system to better help people reach recovery and resiliency. During the transition, OptumHealth will work hard to ensure that anyone needing access to mental health services receives the care they need.

**Q: Why is Pierce County's Residential Treatment Facility Closing?**

A: As part of OptumHealth's new program, and after many discussions with Pierce County Human Services, we are transitioning away from the Evaluation & Treatment (E & T), Crisis Triage and other services Pierce County operates effective October 1, 2009. OptumHealth has created a transition plan with other community stakeholders to ensure that anyone who needs access to mental health services continues to receive the care they need. The transition plan will be in place until a new Crisis Triage and E & T facility opens at the end of the year.

**Q: When is Pierce County's Residential Treatment Facility Closing?**

A: Pierce County's Residential Treatment facility closing dates are September 14 at 8:59 a.m. for involuntary placement, September 24 for voluntary admissions and September 29 at 5:00 p.m. for Crisis Triage Services.

**Q: What will happen when Pierce County's Residential Treatment Facility closes?**

A: On September 14 at 8:59 a.m. the E & T facility at Pierce County will stop admissions for all 72 hour holds/detentions. All people (voluntary and involuntary) at the Pierce County E & T at 8:59 a.m. will remain there to complete their stays. People who are detained after 9:00 a.m. on September 14 by the current Mobile Crisis Team operated by Pierce County will be transported by ambulance to an 18-bed E & T unit at Western State Hospital.

During the transition, Western State Hospital will have this new acute intake ward of 18 beds available for 72 hour holds, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If Western State Hospital is full, the Designated Mental Health Professionals working with OptumHealth will use other options, including E & T beds across the state and, when appropriate, nine Crisis Residential Beds available for persons in a crisis, six at Comprehensive Community Mental Health and three at Greater Lakes Community Mental Health Center.

The current Mobile Crisis Outreach Team will manage placement of these beds for individuals as needed working directly with consumers, law enforcement and hospitals. Our intention is to use these residential beds with appropriate staff for single bed certifications until further beds become available at Western State Hospital or as step downs to free up beds at Western State Hospital.

**Q: What is happening to the Mobile Outreach Crisis Unit?**

A: Multi-Care Good Samaritan will take over the Crisis Mobile Outreach Services on October 1, 2009. Their team will shadow the current Pierce County crisis team prior to then to ensure a smooth transition. Many of the current Pierce County staff will have the opportunity to transition to the new team.

During the transition period prior to the opening of the new Crisis Triage and E&T units, the Mobile Outreach Crisis Team will be enhanced as needed with additional staff to assist hospitals and emergency rooms, law enforcement officials and those needing help in the community.

**Q: What will happen to the current Crisis Line?**

A: The number will remain the same 1-800-576-7764. People can call that number to receive support from a master's level clinician 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These clinicians will determine the best course of action, and if needed, dispatch members of the Mobile Outreach Crisis Team for a full assessment and intervention.

**Q: Who will provide mental health services to the jail?**

A: Mental health services will continue to be provided under contract by Pierce County Human Services to the jail staff for persons who need mental health services. OptumHealth also has contracts with three other agencies to provide mental health services in the jail to assist with early discharges/reinstatement if one of their current consumers is arrested.

**Q: How will services work for law enforcement during the transition?**

A: Law enforcement will no longer take people to the Pierce County Crisis Triage facility as of September 29. They will have several options instead, beginning with calling the Crisis Line (1-800-576-7764) for immediate assistance by a master's level mental health professional.

Crisis line staff will work with law enforcement to determine the best course of action for the individuals in their custody. Options for officers, depending on the initial assessment at the scene, may include transporting the person to the Metropolitan Development Council Sobering Center, bringing them to the Tacoma Detox, delivering them to the emergency room or arresting the individual if a crime was committed. The Mobile

Outreach Crisis Team can be dispatched immediately to assist officers. The Crisis Team also has access to crisis and residential beds if needed when law enforcement bring people to the emergency room for mental health support. If needed, OptumHealth contracted providers will offer hospitals mental health professionals to augment existing emergency room staff should they experience an increase in volume.

In late 2009, Telecare and Recovery Innovations will open 16 E & T beds and an 18-bed Crisis Triage on the Western State Hospital campus. These facilities will later move to the community, along with an additional 16-bed E & T operated by Greater Lakes Mental Health.

**Q: What should people do if they go to the closed Puget Sound Hospital Building, where the Pierce County facility was located?**

A: People should not go to the Puget Sound Hospital Building. For those who do, an intercom system will be installed at the Puget Sound Hospital Building where the Pierce County facility is currently located. When people push the button, the line will be immediately answered by crisis line staff that will evaluate, address and triage their call. Based on the assessment, staff can send an ambulance to the scene, call for police assistance or have the Mobile Outreach Crisis Team come to him/her for assistance.

If the situation is determined not to be an immediate crisis, the crisis team will follow-up the next day to schedule same-day appointments if the person is enrolled in an agency. If they are not enrolled, the crisis team will provide them with appointments the next day to assist them with accessing community resources. People in crisis that are already receiving services from an agency can directly call their provider to access same day services.

**Q: How will hospitals be involved in the temporary transition plan?**

A: During the transition, law enforcement may have to bring people to emergency rooms for mental health support. OptumHealth's contracted providers will offer hospitals staff support to augment existing emergency room staff should they experience an increase in volume.

Local hospitals could see an increase in single-bed certifications during this transition while a new crisis facility is being developed. OptumHealth will work with hospitals to minimize this impact, and is actively developing alternatives for use in the interim period, including developing agreements to access additional E & T beds with other providers across the State.

**Q: What do people do that are currently receiving care from an agency?**

A: People in crisis that are receiving services from an agency can continue to access same day services when they call their care provider.

**Q: What should hospitals do if they cannot admit patients for psychiatric reasons because they are not credentialed or licensed psychiatric providers?**

A: Call the Crisis Line at 1(800) 576-7764. If requested by the hospital, the crisis line will dispatch a Mobile Outreach Crisis Team Designated Mental Health Professional to determine if an individual requires involuntary treatment. If this determination is made, an authorization for a single bed certification will be secured and authorized at a local hospital on an interim basis. If approved, this allows hospitals to admit the consumer under a “single bed certification” and receive compensation for their services. In addition, OptumHealth has worked with providers to create new services to treat consumers who may not need full inpatient care but who need a short term crisis respite bed. This service will be available starting September 14, 2009.

**Q: How will people who might be at risk for self-harm or a danger to others receive help?**

A: When an individual is believed to be at risk of self-harm or danger to others, call the Crisis Line at 1(800) 576-7764. A master’s level clinician will assess the situation and dispatch the Mobile Outreach Crisis Team. If necessary, an independent Designated Mental Health Professional will be sent to evaluate and make a decision regarding treatment. If it is determined that the individual will seek voluntary hospitalization, the hospital will call OptumHealth at 1(866) 673-6256 to seek authorization or discuss alternatives.

**Q: What is OptumHealth’s role in Pierce County?**

A: OptumHealth was selected by the State of Washington to manage the Regional Support Network for Pierce County residents. As one of the state’s 13 RSNs, OptumHealth manages, develops and contracts for all mental health services funded by the state for people on Medicaid and others who meet the criteria for state-funded services.

As part of the contract, OptumHealth committed to enhancing existing essential services, while adding new, proven treatment options to support recovery and resiliency. With feedback from the community, a new set of solutions was created that included adding providers with strong track records in community based mental health crisis programs and experience in operating facilities in ways that meet federal funding requirements.

Our core strategies remain – focusing clearly on those most in need, using careful review of data and the insights of consumers and providers as well as more structured processes for assessment and the delivery of crisis services.

**Q: Who can I contact if I have questions about the transition?**

A: Call OptumHealth at 253-292-4200 or 866-673-6256