

Behavioral health

“Every community and neighborhood is experiencing the need for more behavioral health care. The deadly fentanyl crisis has brought new urgency to our efforts. We’ve been making progress with opening facilities that will treat thousands more patients. To keep up that momentum, we rely on community partnerships to break down the stigma surrounding behavioral health and support providers that seek to build places and programs of health and healing.”

— Gov. Jay Inslee

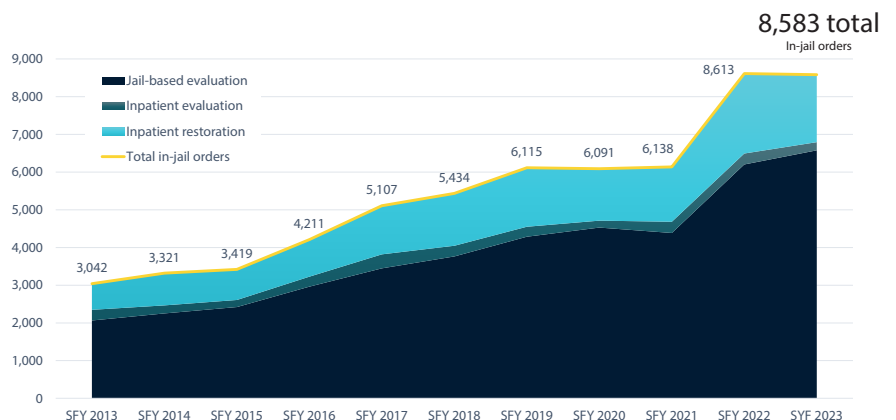
Behavioral health

Washington is making progress on its commitment to transform its behavioral health system. In 2018, Gov. Jay Inslee launched an ambitious plan to transform Washington’s behavioral health system. Since then, the state has made significant investments in community-based behavioral health options to better meet Washingtonians’ needs. Progress has continued despite challenges, including the opioid (fentanyl) crisis, COVID-19 and national workforce shortages.

However, spikes in demand have outpaced the growing system’s capacity. And rising demand coming from the criminal justice system poses huge challenges. Demands have overtaxed the system of state-operated beds while highlighting a systemic problem: criminalizing people with behavioral health needs.

Court orders for competency evaluation and restoration services have increased 60% since 2018. Inpatient referrals have increased 145% since 2013. The state has been and will continue to do its part, adding hundreds more forensic beds. But even with the unprecedented expansion of bed capacity and community services, this rate of growth is neither manageable nor sustainable.

Statewide court orders for DSHS competency services have increased by nearly 60% since 2018



Sources: BHA Forensic Data System (FDS), WSH-FES; ESH - MILO

This leaves people to struggle without the care they need. Inslee's 2024 supplemental budget prioritizes these urgent needs and provides a balanced approach to expand community-based services and increase capacity at state-run facilities.

This approach will help people connect with services earlier, closer to home, and at the appropriate level of care for their needs. Access to appropriate care can reduce someone's time in high-level care or even prevent them from being hospitalized. In addition, lessening the pressure on high-level systems of care frees up capacity for people with more severe and chronic behavioral health needs.

Build an ecosystem of community-based care

To be successful, the state must invest in community-based behavioral health care. People need access to the right care, at the right time and in the right place. We can better meet those needs by expanding community-based capacity to deliver services and by lessening the pressure on involuntary and high-level systems of care (such as at our state hospitals). This includes expanding access to prevention, early intervention, diversion, crisis response and outpatient treatment, and strategically expanding inpatient treatment for populations with specialty needs. It also requires a strong and diverse workforce, including peers and those with lived experience. With these elements in place, people can receive care sooner, closer to home and avoid more restrictive and involuntary systems of care, when possible.

Expand capacity for inpatient treatment

It is also critical to increase bed capacity at state-run and community-based facilities. Demand far exceeds the system's current capacity, and needs continue to grow. When people cannot access

appropriate systems of care early, they can end up in more restrictive settings such as involuntary civil commitment facilities or in forensic services through the criminal legal system. While ensuring people do not reach these high-level systems in the first place is crucial, Washington needs more capacity for people who need higher levels of care.

Building a system of care that focuses on prevention and early intervention takes time, and many people are waiting now for inpatient care. Long waits can worsen an individual's condition, may be more traumatic, more costly, and lead to poor health outcomes for the individual. Adding beds at state-run and community-based facilities will help reduce these impacts and help relieve the backlog for these services. This is a key way the state will be better equipped to meet people's needs and ensure their rights and health are protected.

Department of Social and Health Services

Create additional state-run bed capacity

The department purchased the Cascade Behavioral Health hospital facilities in Tukwila and renamed it Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health in 2023. As patients move to this facility from Western State Hospital, DSHS will add at least 72 beds of new capacity for behavioral health patients by the end of fiscal year 2024. The governor's budget also provides funding to re-open wards at Western State Hospital and Eastern State Hospital, bringing an additional 38 forensic beds online in January 2024.

This item also appears in the Human Services section of the budget highlights.

(\$186.3 million GF-S, \$1.2 million GF-F)

Invest in state hospital staffing

Recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff at the state hospitals has been challenging. Staffing vacancies have been as high as 40% at our state hospitals, and the department requires funding to hire contracted staff to keep state hospital wards open and operating. To remedy this, the governor's budget invests in programs designed to attract and retain staff at our state hospitals. Funding will reimburse staff for the continuing education training they need to maintain their licenses, provide clinical training to competency restoration staff, and hire nurse recruiters. The department will also create a postdoctoral program in psychology at Western State Hospital and create a nursing residency program at Western State Hospital and Eastern State Hospital.

This item also appears in the Human Services section of the budget highlights.

(\$38.4 million GF-S)

Establish Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health

This budget invests in behavioral health by purchasing the Cascade Hospital facilities, now called the Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health facility in Tukwila. This will reduce the number of individuals on the forensic bed waitlist by creating at least 72 beds of new capacity. In addition, to the purchase of the facility, there will be capital improvements made to the facility that will strengthen safety and security measures on and outside the wards for staff and patients, improve nursing stations, upgrade heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units, and expand the existing activity areas to promote larger motor activities .

This item also appears in the Human Services section of the budget highlights.

(\$45 million bonds)



DSHS purchased the Cascade Behavioral Health hospital facilities in Tukwila and renamed it Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health in 2023. As patients move to this facility from Western State Hospital, DSHS will add at least 72 beds of new capacity for behavioral health patients by the end of fiscal year 2024.



In January 2023, Gov. Jay Inslee joined leaders from the state Department of Social and Health Services to open the Civil Center for Behavioral Health at Maple Lane. The 16-bed behavioral health facility is part of the governor's five-year plan to transform behavioral health care in Washington state by prioritizing community-based care settings and more intimate, therapeutic environments.

Design Child Study and Treatment Center to house youth

Additional funding will help the state design an addition to the facility to support approximately 20 youth at the Child Study and Treatment Center. This project will develop a facility-based, holistic residential habilitation program. Tailored for youth with complex needs who present challenging support issues, this project will provide options when less restrictive out-of-home treatment options are inappropriate, unavailable or have failed to bring positive outcomes. Specialized 'pod style' housing with shared communal space will mimic a home-like feel. This setup will create a campus to support the unique needs of this demographic, while access to educational, occupational, and therapeutic needs will improve their mental and physical well-being.

This item also appears in the Human Services section of the budget highlights.

(\$5 million bonds)

Health Care Authority Increase rates for community behavioral health providers

To create robust community behavioral health services, the governor's budget increases rates for 90-180 day bed providers. This will increase the number of available beds located in communities. When individuals receive behavioral health services closer to home and their support network, their outcomes improve. In addition, space constraints at our state hospitals create a need for behavioral health services in the community. The budget increases rates for teams that support individuals preparing to transition from institutional to community settings, and for community teams that support individuals with severe behavioral health disorders.

This item also appears in the Human Services section of the budget highlights.

(\$44.9 million GF-S, \$67.7 million GF-F)

Support behavioral health services facilities

The governor's operating and capital budgets invest in community facilities that provide critical access to behavioral health services. The Department of Commerce grants assist behavioral health providers opening facilities. Because of high operating costs, maintaining services is difficult so funding is provided to assist these facilities with operating costs and allow community behavioral health clinics to serve individuals regardless of their ability to pay.

This item also appears in the Human Services section of the budget highlights.

(\$7.2 million GF-S)

Strengthen behavioral health services for youth

Early intervention is key to preventing or delaying the onset of behavioral health disorders, and the governor's proposed budget addresses this in three ways. One, funding will expand support for youth and young adults at their initial psychotic episode. Two, funding will help community residential services for young adults exiting inpatient behavioral health facilities and who are at high risk for homelessness. And three, stabilization teams will surround youth in crisis with a support system composed of behavioral health professionals, family and community members.

This item also appears in the Human Services section of the budget highlights.

(\$11.1 million GF-S; \$8.6 million GF-F)

Expand behavioral health programs

Funding will expand programs and increase rates for teams that support individuals preparing to transition from institutional to community settings, and for community teams that support individuals with severe behavioral health disorders. Both groups provide vital behavioral health services. The governor's budget also extends the diversion programs launched in 2018 as result of the Trueblood settlement agreement contempt fines. This program provides assessments, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, case management, employment, and social services to reduce recidivism and improve the lives of class members.

This item also appears in the Human Services section of the budget highlights.

(\$18.9 million GF-S, \$9.4 million GF-F)

Department of Commerce

Establish crisis stabilization for Trueblood Phase 3

Funding for this project will develop 16 licensed crisis stabilization beds in the Thurston or Mason County region so the state can meet implementation plan expectations for Phase 3 of the Trueblood Settlement Agreement. This community-based approach will provide short-term, prompt attention and support in a respectful environment for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis or an acute behavioral health problem. These crisis stabilization beds will serve as a health care alternative to jail, emergency room settings, or evaluation and treatment center services.

This item also appears in the General Government section of the budget highlights.

(\$5 million bonds)

Behavioral health strategic agenda

Summary of investments, 2024 operating and capital budgets

Focus Area	Items	Agency	Amount
Create additional state-run bed capacity	Forensic Beds at Western State Hospital and Eastern State Hospital	Department of Social and Health Services - BHA	\$31,059,000
	Maple Lane Phase 1	Department of Social and Health Services - BHA	\$15,558,000
	Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health	Department of Social and Health Services - BHA	\$140,924,000
Total			\$187,541,000
Invest in state hospital staffing	Clinical Contracted Staffing	Department of Social and Health Services - BHA	\$36,346,000
	Compression and Inversion	Department of Social and Health Services - BHA	\$122,000
	Staff Recruitment & Retention	Department of Social and Health Services - BHA	\$1,904,000
Total			\$38,372,000
Increase rates for community behavioral health providers	Adult Family Homes Tiered Rates CBA	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$51,442,000
	Behavioral Health Comparison Rates Phase 3	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$500,000
	Behavioral Health Personal Care - 1915i Waiver	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$31,931,000
	Rate Increase for 90-Day and 180-Day Beds	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$28,765,000
Total			\$112,638,000
Strengthen behavioral health services for youth	Kooth	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$1,490,000
	New Journeys	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$5,000,000
	Young Adult Discharge Facility	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$3,000,000
	Youth Stabilization Teams	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$10,204,000
Total			\$19,694,000

Focus Area	Items	Agency	Amount
Support behavioral health services facilities	Community Behavioral Health Clinics	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$5,000,000
	IBHTF Operations & Tech Assistance	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$2,174,000
Total			\$7,174,000
Expand behavioral health programs	Program of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) Stabilization	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$16,445,000
	Peer Bridger Expansion	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$1,848,000
	Street Medicine Pilot	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$2,000,000
	Trueblood Diversion Programs	Health Care Authority - CBH	\$8,000,000
Total			\$28,293,000
Capital investments	Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health	Department of Social and Health Services	\$45,000,000
	Child Study and Treatment Center Youth Housing	Department of Social and Health Services	\$5,000,000
	Crisis Stabilization Trueblood Phase 3	Department of Commerce	\$5,000,000
Total			\$55,000,000
Grand Total			\$448,712,000