



Cowlitz County Health Department

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News Release

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Cowlitz County Health and Human Services makes changes in Behavioral Health service.

The Cowlitz County Board of Commissioners in conjunction with the South West Regional Support Network (SWRSN) leadership will not be renewing the contracted services with the Center for Behavioral Solutions (CBS), a division of Peace Health. The State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services works through Regional Support Networks to manage services for Medicaid eligible mental health service recipients. Since 2001, the SWRSN has contracted with CBS and other contracted agencies to provide mental health services to the public.

Both SWRSN and Peace Health CBS have the best interest of the patients and citizens of Cowlitz County at the center of their missions. "We recognize the ongoing connections that we have with Peace Health and look forward to working closely with them on current and future projects" stated Carlos Carreon, Director of the Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department. "It is our commitment that, in this time of great transition in the health care industry and the shift in federal and state requirements, we can provide excellent, accessible and quality mental health care to the public".

Across the state of Washington, there has been a steady transition from "hospital-based" Medicaid outpatient behavioral health services to a community health based model, with the SWRSN being the last make this transition. While **inpatient** services, as well as other outpatient behavioral health programs will still be provided by Peace Health's St. John Medical Center, Medicaid outpatient services will be transitioned to other service providers.

Both SWRSN and CBS will collaborate to draft and implement a transition plan for services to ease the movement of patient care. It is estimated that the transition will be completed by the beginning of 2012. The skilled mental health providers who will transition from PeaceHealth will have the opportunity to be a part of the future plans to provide behavioral health services to the public.

The state of Washington Medicaid behavioral health program provides oversight, coordination and management for federal and state dollars through the Regional Support Network. Cowlitz County is one of only three counties that combines the RSN in conjunction with public health services which increases the emphasis upon prevention in the health of the total person. SWRSN in conjunction with public health is crafting a future that will increase emphasis

upon prevention of not only behavioral health problems but physical problems as well. Cowlitz County is a recognized state leader in this innovative approach.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank Peace Health for their contributions of services provided to the public and look forward to future collaborations" stated Carlos Carreon.

Please direct all questions about services or transition of care to the Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department at (360) 501-1201.

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