

RCW 71.40.010 Findings—Intent. (1) The legislature finds that:

- (a) According to the federal substance abuse and mental health services administration's 2019 report, one in five adults in the United States will experience some form of mental illness this year and one in thirteen will need substance use disorder treatment;
 - (b) Fewer than half of all individuals needing behavioral health treatment receive those services;
 - (c) An untreated behavioral health need can have long-term negative impacts on an individual's health, well-being, and productivity;
 - (d) The state has made significant investments in the efficacy of the publicly funded behavioral health system and its providers;
 - (e) Behavioral health parity is required by both state and federal law;
 - (f) All patients deserve to be treated and cared for with dignity and respect;
 - (g) Patients often cross local and administrative boundaries when seeking effective behavioral health care;
 - (h) Individuals with behavioral health needs are disproportionately involved with the criminal justice system; and
 - (i) Providing robust community-based services can prevent expensive hospitalizations.
- (2) The legislature intends to create the state office of the behavioral health consumer advocacy that shall:
- (a) Advocate for all patients seeking privately and publicly funded behavioral health services;
 - (b) Advocate for all patients receiving inpatient behavioral health services from a behavioral health provider or facility;
 - (c) Assure that patients are afforded all of the rights given to them by state and federal laws;
 - (d) Maintain independence and be free from all conflicts of interest;
 - (e) Provide consistent quality services across the state; and
 - (f) Retain an office within the boundaries of the region served by each behavioral health administrative services organization. [2021 c 202 § 1.]