

**RCW 71.24.015 Legislative intent—Community behavioral health system.** It is the intent of the legislature to establish a community behavioral health system which shall help people experiencing mental illness or a substance use disorder to retain a respected and productive position in the community. This will be accomplished through programs that focus on resilience and recovery, and practices that are evidence-based, research-based, consensus-based, or, where these do not exist, promising or emerging best practices, which provide for:

(1) Access to behavioral health services for adults with mental illness and children with mental illness, emotional disturbances, or substance use disorders, that recognize the special needs of underserved populations, including minorities, children, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income persons. Access to mental health and substance use disorder services shall not be limited by a person's history of confinement in a state, federal, or local correctional facility. It is also the purpose of this chapter to promote the early identification of children with mental illness and to ensure that they receive the mental health care and treatment which is appropriate to their developmental level. This care should improve home, school, and community functioning, maintain children in a safe and nurturing home environment, and should enable treatment decisions to be made in response to clinical needs in accordance with sound professional judgment while also recognizing parents' rights to participate in treatment decisions for their children;

(2) The involvement of persons with mental illness or substance use disorder, their family members, and advocates in designing and implementing behavioral health services that reduce unnecessary hospitalization and incarceration and promote recovery and employment. To improve the quality of services available and promote the rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration of persons with mental illness or substance use disorder, consumer and advocate participation in behavioral health services is an integral part of the community behavioral health system and shall be supported;

(3) Accountability of efficient and effective services through state-of-the-art outcome and performance measures and statewide standards for monitoring client and system outcomes, performance, and reporting of client and system outcome information. These processes shall be designed so as to maximize the use of available resources for direct care of people with a mental illness and to assure uniform data collection across the state;

(4) Minimum service delivery standards;

(5) Priorities for the use of available resources for the care of individuals with mental illness or substance use disorder consistent with the priorities defined in the statute;

(6) Coordination of services within the department of social and health services, the authority, the department, the department of children, youth, and families, and the office of the superintendent of public instruction, and among state mental hospitals, tribes, residential treatment facilities, county authorities, behavioral health administrative services organizations, managed care organizations, community behavioral health services, and other support services, which shall to the maximum extent feasible also include the families of individuals with mental illness or substance use disorder, and other service providers, including Indian health care providers; and

(7) Coordination of services aimed at reducing duplication in service delivery and promoting complementary services among all entities that provide behavioral health services to adults and children.

It is the policy of the state to encourage the provision of a full range of treatment and rehabilitation services in the state for mental disorders, or substance use disorders, including services operated by consumers and advocates. The legislature intends to encourage the development of regional behavioral health services with adequate local flexibility to assure eligible people in need of care access to the least-restrictive treatment alternative appropriate to their needs, and the availability of treatment components to assure continuity of care. The legislature hereby finds and declares that sound fiscal management requires vigilance to ensure that funds appropriated by the legislature for the provision of needed community behavioral health system services are ultimately expended solely for the purpose for which they were appropriated, and not for any other purpose.

It is further the intent of the legislature to integrate the provision of services to provide continuity of care through all phases of treatment. To this end, the legislature intends to promote active engagement with persons with mental illness and collaboration between families and service providers. [2019 c 325 § 1002; 2018 c 201 § 4001; 2014 c 225 § 6; 2005 c 503 § 1. Prior: 2001 c 334 § 6; 2001 c 323 § 1; 1999 c 214 § 7; 1991 c 306 § 1; 1989 c 205 § 1; 1986 c 274 § 1; 1982 c 204 § 2.]

**Effective date—2019 c 325:** See note following RCW 71.24.011.

**Findings—Intent—Effective date—2018 c 201:** See notes following RCW 41.05.018.

**Correction of references—2005 c 503:** "The code reviser shall replace all references to "county designated mental health professional" with "designated mental health professional" in the Revised Code of Washington." [2005 c 503 § 16.]

**Savings—2005 c 503:** "This act does not affect any existing right acquired or liability or obligation incurred under the sections amended or repealed in this act or under any rule or order adopted under those sections, nor does it affect any proceeding instituted under those sections." [2005 c 503 § 17.]

**Severability—2005 c 503:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2005 c 503 § 18.]

**Effective date—2001 c 334:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 15, 2001]." [2001 c 334 § 10.]

**Intent—Effective date—1999 c 214:** See notes following RCW 72.09.370.

**Conflict with federal requirements—1991 c 306:** "If any part of this act is found to be in conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application to the agencies concerned. The rules under this act shall meet federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state.

However, if any part of this act conflicts with such federal requirements, the state appropriation for mental health services provided to children whose mental disorders are discovered under screening through the federal Title XIX early and periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment program shall be provided through the division of medical assistance and no state funds appropriated to the division of mental health shall be expended or transferred for this purpose." [1991 c 306 § 7.]

**Effective date—1986 c 274 §§ 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9:** "Sections 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9 of this act shall take effect on July 1, 1987." [1986 c 274 § 11.]