

**1. FY2021-2023 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY AND BUDGET INITIATIVES**

**a. Budget Overview**

- This has been an unprecedented year for major behavioral health policy and budget initiatives. **See attachment #1**: “2021-2023 Behavioral Health Investments”
- HCA is still working on the individual allocations to each BH-ASO. These will be included in our July 2021 contract documents.

**b. E2SHB 1477 – “988” bill**

- Planning has begun to implement the new “988” system in Washington State in accord with the requirements on House Bill 1477
- There is an initial statewide “Implementation Planning Committee” which is conducting a “landscape analysis” of what the current capacity is of the regional BH-ASO administered crisis lines.
- This planning committee will provide its recommendations to the *Crisis Response Improvement Strategy Committee* which will develop the implementation plan.
- We have also begun meetings with the Volunteers of America to plan how 988 will be implemented in the North Sound Region.
- Included in 1477 is funding for one Mobile Crisis Team for Children and Youth in each region. The BH-ASO will be spearheading the planning for this team.

**c. EHSB 5476 [responding to the Blake decision]**

- Planning has also begun to implement the new set of Substance Use recovery and treatment services that EHSB 5476 has established in response the “Blake” decision.
- The bill directs the Health Care Authority (Authority) to establish a substance use recovery services advisory committee. The committee is to develop a substance use recovery services plan with a preliminary report due on December 1, 2021, and final report by December 1, 2022. The plan is to be implemented by December 1, 2023.
- Funding is allocated to HCA to create a grant program to provide treatment services to low-income individuals, establish an expanded recovery support services program, and to establish a homeless outreach stabilization transition program.
- Each Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (BHASO) must establish a recovery navigator program that provides community-based outreach, intake, assessment, and connection to services to youth and adults with substance use disorders.
- Funding is being provided for the BH-ASOs to create a regional Recovery Program Coordinator to develop the program. The program is to include creating and funding recovery “navigators”.

- The North Sound BH-ASO can contract with behavioral health agencies, counties, or other organizations to hire and support the navigators. The regional Recovery Program Coordinator will be an ASO staff person.

**d. North Sound Budget Provisos**

**i. Whatcom County:**

- The two proviso allocations for Whatcom County will be allocated to the BH-ASO to be then allocated to the identified providers. We are currently working with Whatcom County and HCA on the scope of work. These allocations are:
  - 1) \$300,000 in both FY 2022 and FY 2023 to provide “trauma informed counseling services to children and youth in Whatcom County schools.
  - 2) \$200,000 in both FY 2022 and FY 2023 to establish the “Whatcom county crisis stabilization center as a pilot project for diversion from the criminal justice system to appropriate community-based treatment”.

**ii. Island County:**

- \$750,0000 is allocated as a one-time grant directly to Island county to fund a pilot program to improve behavioral health outcomes for young people in rural communities.

**e. Long Term Housing Assistance**

- The Department of Commerce has been allocated an additional \$10 million for long term rental assistance. The BH-ASOs will be designated as the **lead grantees** for the funds. These are similar to the HARPS funds we now receive.
- New performance measures will be included with these funds including measures for racial equity. We will need to submit a plan for use of them.

**2. FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT ALLOCATIONS**

BH-ASOs will receive 3 different sets of Federal Block Grant Allocations – both the Mental Health Block Grant [MHBG] and the Substance Abuse Block Grant [SABG]:

- 1) The regular fiscal year allocations for FY 2021-2022 which will be the same as our current regular fiscal year allocations.
- 2) The special “COVID” Federal Block Grant Allocations appropriated last December.
- 3) A new third round of Federal Block Grant allocations authorized by the American Rescue Act [ARA].

**a. FY 2021-2022 Regular Federal Block Grant Allocation**

- Our plan for use of our **regular FBG** is due to HCA by July 15, but they have agreed to give us an extension to August so our Advisory Board will have a chance to review.
- We are proposing to use the same allocation plans for FY 2021-2022 subject to Advisory Board Approval. Attached is our current year MHBG and SABG plans.
- Attached are the current plans to assist with Advisory Board and Board of Directors review prior to the August Board meetings. [attachments 2 and 3]

**b. COVID Supplemental Federal Block Grant Allocation**

- HCA will be providing us with our COVID Supplemental FBG allocations either as part of our July contract amendment or shortly afterwards, once SAMHSA approves the state's plan.
- The state will receive \$19.2 million for MHBG and \$35.4 million for SABG. These funds must be expended by **March 31, 2023**.
- We've been gathering input on priorities for this round of allocations. Attached is a preliminary list of the priorities identified so far—"Ideas for use of new federal dollars". [attachment 4]
- HCA has notified us that we will also receive a portion of the \$3.2 million SABG COVID Supplemental set-aside for SUD outreach funding. This funding is to be used for *interdisciplinary teams, to include peer specialists, to engage and facilitate linkage to treatment for individuals in community settings such as homeless encampments, shelters, ER, harm reduction programs, churches, community service offices, food banks, libraries, legal offices and other settings where individuals with SUD may be engaged.*

**c. American Rescue Act Federal Block Grant Allocation**

- States have been given notice of the amount of funds they could receive from the American Rescue Act.
- Our state will receive \$30.5 million for SABG and \$33.2 million for MHBG. The funding would be spread out over 4 years. HCA is just beginning to put together the plan to submit to SAMHSA. They may be proposing to use this round of funds to continue the funding for the programs funded with the COVID Supplemental FBG funds.

**3. WORKFORCE SHORTAGES- Update**

- The MCOs made a presentation to the May 14 Interlocal Leadership Structure meeting on the highlights of the plans they submitted to HCA to address the access to care problems in our region.

- Some of their ideas included:

- Implementation or expansion of telehealth
- Contracting with new providers
- Exploring how to use their primary care network
- Assessing whether their mild-to moderate network would be willing to see some of their Medicaid members
- Use of phone-based recovery apps
- Expanding Peer services

- Subsequent to the ILS meeting we developed a list of suggestions gathered from providers, MCOs and other sources. We are surveying the MCOs to see which of these solutions they feel they could commit to working on regionally and/or within their individual networks.
- HCA has also hired two staff to develop a statewide behavioral health workforce development plan. The plan includes implementation of several workforce bills just passed in this legislative session and a state-wide marketing campaign aimed at encouraging more people to pursue training and education as a behavioral health professional.

#### 4. CRISIS SERVICES

a. **Weekly Crisis Capacity Indicator Report** – through May 29 [attachment #5]

- Calls to the Crisis Line remain at historically high levels and have begun trending up upwards again for 3 weeks before dipping down in the last week of May.
- The number of mobile crisis outreach team dispatches had also been climbing for the last 6 weeks, along a continued upwards trend line, cut like crisis calls dipped down in the last week of May. The same for ITA investigations.

b. **North Sound Crisis System Dashboard** – through April 2021 [attachment 6]

- Dennis Regan, the North Sound BH-ASO data analyst, has created a customized crisis services dashboard for the Advisory Board. It provides an unduplicated count of persons who have received crisis services as well as providing individual county level breakdowns.

## 5. PROGRAM INTEGRITY PLAN

- The North Sound BH-ASO has updated its Program Integrity Plan for 2021. It outlines the steps the ASO is taking to ensure the implementation of the 7 necessary elements of an effective Compliance Program.
- The 2021 Plan is similar to the 2020 plan but has added Social Equity to the core values listed for the North Sound BH-ASO.
- If you have any questions, or would like a copy, you can contact the North Sound compliance officer at [compliance\\_officer@nsbhaso.org](mailto:compliance_officer@nsbhaso.org).

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