



The Southwest Washington Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization

In April 2016 Clark and Skamania become the first counties in the state to provide whole-person care to Medicaid (Apple Health) clients. They will receive a full continuum of physical health, mental health and substance use disorder services within the Apple Health program. The majority of these services will be provided through managed care organizations (MCOs) and the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA), which purchases health care services for Medicaid clients.

Some services in this community, such as response services for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, must be available to all individuals in Southwest Washington regardless of their insurance status or income level. For this reason, the HCA will have a contract with an organization known as a Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization (BH-ASO) to provide these services in Clark and Skamania counties.

How is a BH-ASO different from a Behavioral Health Organization (BHO)?

The HCA and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) purchase physical and behavioral health services along boundaries known as regional service areas (RSAs). There are 10 RSAs across the state. In every region except Southwest Washington, Medicaid beneficiaries will receive their specialty mental health services and substance use disorder services through an organization known as a Behavioral Health Organization (BHO).

In these regions, the BHOs will also operate the mental health crisis system and be responsible for some of the same administrative functions as the BH-ASO.

Southwest Washington has elected to pursue a different model, in which most Medicaid services, including physical health, mental health and substance use disorder services, will be provided through an Apple Health plan.

Unlike the BHO, the BH-ASO is not responsible for the full continuum of behavioral health services for the Medicaid population. The BH-ASO is only responsible for a subset of crisis-related services for Medicaid clients, and is responsible for providing limited services to individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid, as well as managing certain administrative functions.

For more information on BHOs, please visit: www.dshs.wa.gov/bhsia/division-behavioral-health-and-recovery/developing-behavioral-health-organizations .

What services will the BH-ASO provide to anyone in the region, regardless of insurance status?

Certain services must be available to anyone in Southwest Washington, regardless of their insurance status or income level. The following services may be provided by the BH-ASO to anyone in the region who is experiencing a mental health or substance use disorder crisis:

- A 24/7/365 regional crisis hotline to triage, refer and dispatch calls for mental health and substance use disorder crises;
- Mental health crisis services, including the dispatch of mobile crisis outreach teams staffed by mental health professionals and certified peer counselors;
- Short-term substance use disorder crisis services for people intoxicated or incapacitated in public;
- Designated Mental Health Professionals (DMHPs) who can apply the Mental Health Involuntary Treatment Act, available 24/7 to conduct Involuntary Treatment Act assessments and file detention petitions;
- Chemical dependency specialist who can apply the substance use disorder involuntary commitment statute, including services to identify and evaluate alcohol and drug involved individuals who may need protective custody, detention, etc. The chemical dependency specialist will also manage case findings and legal proceedings for substance use disorder involuntary commitment cases.

What services will the BH-ASO provide only to people who are low income, uninsured, and not eligible for Medicaid?

The BH-ASO may provide certain mental health and substance use disorder services to people who are not enrolled in or otherwise eligible for Medicaid. For some services, like services funded through the federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) block grant, individuals may need to meet other priority population requirements to be considered eligible.

The BH-ASO may provide the following services to individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid:

- Mental health evaluation and treatment services for individuals who are involuntarily detained or agree to a voluntary commitment;
- Residential substance use disorder treatment services for individuals involuntarily detained as described in state law;

- Outpatient mental health or substance use disorder treatment services, in accordance with a Less Restrictive Alternative court order;
- Within available resources, the BH-ASO may provide non-crisis behavioral health services, such as outpatient substance use disorder and/or mental health services or residential substance use disorder and/or mental health services, to low-income individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid and meet other eligibility criteria.

What other administrative functions will the BH-ASO manage in the region?

- Provide a Behavioral Health Ombudsman to assist individuals with grievances and appeals;
- Manage the mental health block grant based on the locally approved mental health block grant plan;
- Manage Criminal Justice Treatment Account (CJTA) funds and Juvenile Drug Court funds based on CJTA panel's plans for Clark and Skamania counties.

Learn more about the plan to integrate physical and behavioral health at the Healthier Washington website: www.hca.wa.gov/hw/Pages/integrated_purchasing.aspx.