

## Summary of actions to improve staffing and services at Washington state psychiatric hospitals

### Management and organizational culture:

- Hired a new CEO for Western State Hospital in August 2013.
- Appointed a new assistant secretary in August 2015 for behavioral health administration at DSHS.
- Hired a new chief nursing executive and new chief medical officer.
- Established a compliance position to ensure Western State Hospital is complying with mandates from federal and state regulators.
- Created new 12-hour weekend shifts for registered nurses to even out staffing levels across shifts.
- Reorganized staffing office and schedule managers to even out coverage across shifts and across wards.
- Instituted new trainings for all direct-care staff on active engagement, infection control, de-escalation. Nearly 600 staff have already been trained.

### Staffing:

- In response to staff and patient safety concerns, Governor Inslee halted expansion of a new civil ward and redeployed staff to vacant positions on other wards.
- Wards no longer “absorb” the 1:1 staff requirement for a dangerous patient who is ordered to have a 1:1 monitoring. Instead, an additional staff person is brought to the ward.
- Issued a formal request for information to supplement number of current psychiatrists by contracting for psychiatric services for the not guilty by reasons of insanity wards at Western State Hospital.
- Worked with labor to use contractors to cover vacant RN positions on a short-term basis at Eastern State Hospital.
- Adding up to 30 rehabilitative services staff to increase treatment on the wards (funded through June 30, 2016).
- *Governor’s 2016 supplemental budget adds 51 RNs to Western State Hospital.*

### Compensation:

- The Governor’s budget increases funding for compensation for psychiatrists, internists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers bargained and effective December 2015. Funding for continuing education costs for physicians was also included.
- Funding for retention and hiring bonuses for RNs also effective December 2015.

### Response to court orders:

- DSHS is adding capacity at state psychiatric hospitals:
  - 15 new forensic beds are now available at Western State Hospital.
  - 15 new forensic beds at Eastern State Hospital operational as of December 2015.

- 24 beds in Yakima are expected to be operational by March 2016.
- 30 beds at the Maple Lane School are expected to be operational by April 2016.

For the long term:

- *The Governor's proposed 2016 supplemental budget includes five long-term planning efforts to address key questions related to the state psychiatric hospitals:*
  - **Is Western State Hospital too big?** The Governor proposed hiring a consultant to examine the overall structure and role of the state hospital system, including transitions into and out of a state hospital and into the community.
  - **How do we fix the culture at Western State Hospital?** The Governor proposes hiring a consultant to recommend actions to create a sustainable culture of wellness at our state psychiatric hospitals.
  - **What is the best 21<sup>st</sup> century staffing model for the hospitals?** The Governor proposes hiring a consultant to assess clinical roles and help develop a staffing model that promotes professionals practicing at the top of their licenses.
  - **How do we grow our own psychiatric workforce?** The Governor proposed a collaborative partnership with the University of Washington to create a forensic teaching unit.
  - **How do we keep people with mental illness from entering our jails and prisons?** The Governor proposed a task force focused on developing efforts to prevent people with mental illness from entering jails and prisons.