

Trueblood v DSHS

Trueblood is an active lawsuit that challenged unconstitutional delays in competency evaluation and restoration services. In April 2015, a federal court found that the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was taking too long to provide competency evaluation and restoration services. Because of that case, the state entered into a Settlement Agreement that outlines an array of services to better deliver the right care, at the

right time to the right people and reduce the number of people who become or remain class members.

During the first phase of the settlement, July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021, the following will be implemented statewide pending approval by the legislature. Italicized items are planned for regional implementation. Phase One Regions include Southwest, Pierce, and Spokane.

In order to ensure people receive competency evaluations within the court-ordered timeframe of 14 days we will:

- Add 18 additional forensic evaluators.
- Continue implementation of a new forensic data system to better predict and respond to demand.

In order to ensure people receive competency restoration services within the court-ordered timeframe of seven days we will:

- Seek legislative changes to reduce the number of people ordered to restoration services.
- *Implement outpatient restoration programs with residential supports and case management services.*
- Add additional inpatient restoration services capacity.
- Eventual ramp down of the alternate restoration facilities in Yakima and Maple Lane.
- *Create Forensic Navigator positions to facilitate the information sharing needed between the courts, class members, providers, and DSHS.*

Many of the problems with untimely competency evaluations are preventable if fewer people with mental illness enter the criminal justice system. When people are able to get the treatment they need when they need it, they are more likely to avoid the criminal justice system. They are also less likely to place strains on the civil inpatient system. We intend to explore opportunities to provide access to appropriate behavioral health services, which dramatically reduce the number of individuals entering the criminal justice system – enabling the state to meet the constitutional competency evaluation and restoration services timelines. We plan to do this through the below supports, trainings and development:

Crisis Triage and Diversion Support:

- *Increase funding for Crisis Triage and Stabilization facilities, including adding 16 beds in Spokane Region.*
- Assess the need for crisis capacity in King County and develop a plan.
- *Expand Mobile Crisis and Co-responder Programs in which police and mental health providers work together.*
- *Provide residential supports (such as housing subsidies or emergency shelter vouchers) and case management services for select individuals involved in these systems.*

Education and Training:

- *Expand behavioral health crisis training for emergency dispatchers, jail corrections officers, and patrol officers.*
- Provide training and assistance to jails on issues affecting class members.
- Develop best practices for diversion and stabilization of class members.

Workforce Development:

- Develop an enhanced Peer Support Program for individuals with specialized training in criminal justice.
- *Integrate the use of Peer Support Specialists into systems developed within the agreement.*
- Assess the need for training, certification, and degree programs to better meet the mental health system's workforce and training needs.

For more information on Trueblood and the Settlement Agreement, please visit: www.dshs.wa.gov and search "Trueblood"