

Forensic PATH

As part of the Trueblood settlement, the state is funding enhanced engagement to connect identified individuals with services. This will help build relationships with individuals who are identified as most at risk of referral in the next six months for competency restoration (what the settlement calls “high utilizers”).

The Health Care Authority (HCA) will use data such as prior inpatient psychiatric treatment episodes, criminal justice system involvement, and homelessness to support care management strategies for high utilizers. Whenever a high utilizer is referred for competency evaluation, they will be offered services.

This work will rely upon the model we use with individuals experiencing homelessness (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness, or PATH). We are calling it the Forensic PATH model. The Trueblood settlement refers to it as “intensive case management.”

Teams within community behavioral health agencies will include enhanced certified peer counselors who have experience working with homeless populations, and may have lived experience. They will build relationships with individuals and help connect them with supports including housing, transportation and health care services.

While the program is still under development, the principles underlying its design include:

- The program will not duplicate services offered through other health benefits, but will connect the individual with available services and enhance available services.
- The program design must include the ability to offer case management services for individuals who have significant barriers to accessing behavioral health and community supports.
- The initial participation period will be six months.
- HCA will contract with community behavioral health agencies to deliver intensive case management.
- When appropriate, the program will offer housing support including: help securing and maintaining housing, subsidies; transportation assistance; support for accessing health services; and training on independent living skills.
- Contracted community providers will offer outreach and engagement to individuals currently identified as high utilizers, which may occur outside the context of a competency referral.

The Health Care Authority is leading this part of the Trueblood settlement, in close collaboration with the Department of Social and Health Services and community stakeholders.

About the Trueblood settlement of contempt

The Trueblood v. DSHS lawsuit challenged unconstitutional delays in competency evaluation and restoration services for individuals detained in city and county jails. The Trueblood settlement agreement establishes a plan for providing services to persons involved in the criminal court system and for providing treatment to people when needed so they are less likely to become involved in the criminal court system.

The Trueblood settlement agreement includes a plan for phasing in programs and services:

- Pierce, Southwest and Spokane regions (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021)
- King region (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023)
- To be determined (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025)

www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/trueblood-et-al-v-washington-state-dshs

