

Dear Community Partners,

The state Department of Social and Health Services has opened two new treatment facilities, where criminal defendants now in jail or in the community can receive competency restoration services.

The Yakima Competency Restoration Program – a 24-bed facility partially in use – is located at 1500 Pacific Avenue, Yakima, WA 98901.

Maple Lane Competency Restoration Program – a 30-bed facility – is located at 20311 Old Highway 9 SW, Centralia, WA 98531. It is near the Rochester/Grand Mound area.

DSHS understands, as is common with any significant change to a large and complex system, many of you have questions about the new alternate facilities that we hope will be answered here.

Both facilities are intended to serve patients who are assessed to be relatively low in psychiatric acuity and also at a relatively low-level of risk to harm themselves or others. Candidates for admission are screened by clinical staff to determine their appropriateness for the program. Meanwhile both Western and Eastern State hospitals continue to be options for patients. Defendants ordered into competency restoration services will be assessed through a centralized screening process to determine which of the four locations best matches their needs.

State law gives the Secretary of DSHS the discretion for placement for competency restoration. See RCW 10.77.084(1)(b), 10.77.086(1)(a)(i) and 10.77.088(1)(a).

Court Orders

The Administrative Office of the Courts released standardized forms for court orders for competency services pursuant to RCW 10.77 on December 31, 2015, after working several months with stakeholders. Checking the box for “Department Facility” (e.g. pg. 2, section 5 of the felony order) will allow DSHS to place an individual in the state hospital, Yakima, or Maple Lane, depending on the individual needs of that defendant.

Transporting Patients

Transportation for patients coming from jails will be arranged by the sending county. Patients coming to the alternate site from a state psychiatric hospital will be transported by DSHS.

RCW 10.77.078 states that jails must transport a defendant to competency restoration sites **within one day of an offer of admission and must provide a defendant's medical clearance to the state hospital admissions staff.** In order to make efficient use of the new facilities, and place defendants in the most appropriate facility, DSHS requests that jails work with hospital admissions staff in screening individuals for placement. Contact: huntetj@dshs.wa.gov

Additionally you may be contacted by admissions coordinators from Yakima or Maple Lane to determine whether a defendant in your jail is an ideal candidate for admission.



Medication and Personal Belongings

It is requested that the jails provide five days' worth of medications for incoming patients. Unlike the hospitals, the alternate sites do not have an on-site pharmacy and therefore need to order medications. This five-day supply bridges the medication until it is ordered and received by the alternate site.

Storage space is limited at the new facilities. DSHS requests that incoming patients come only with the clothes worn for transport, the requested medications and, if they require it, their own copies of their court documents.

Visitation from Counsel

Just like the state hospitals, attorneys are able to visit patients at the new facilities or communicate by telephone. Plans are underway to develop a videoconferencing system that would enable attorneys to be present via video for face-to-face evaluations by an evaluator.

For questions regarding admissions and transport for specific individuals, please contact Tim Hunter at: huntetj@dshs.wa.gov. For general questions or for more information, please contact Ingrid Lewis at: lewisij@dshs.wa.gov.

Thank you for your attention and assistance in making improvements to our state's forensic mental health system. We look forward to working with you make this new facility efficient and effective for pretrial defendants who are ordered to receive competency restoration services.