

Behavioral Health Administration

**Fact Sheet**

**Title: Forensic Videoconferencing Pilot Project**

Updated: October 2017

<p><b>Overview</b></p>	<p>The Forensic Videoconferencing Pilot Project aims to establish secure videoconferencing links between the State hospitals, forensic evaluators, and county jails in order to test feasibility before broader expansion in the state of Washington. These links will provide the capability for Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) forensic evaluators to conduct evaluations (i.e., competency to stand trial, etc.) from distant sites. The capability also allows attorneys to attend evaluations remotely. The benefits of this capability include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• secure videoconferencing (VC) in jails to allow forensic evaluators to conduct interviews remotely and also allow attorneys to attend from their offices;</li> <li>• greater efficiency at completing court-ordered competency to stand trial evaluations;</li> <li>• reduced wait-time for defendants waiting in jail; and</li> <li>• expansion for other purposes (e.g., court hearings, training).</li> </ul> <p>Inter-local agreements with four participating county jails have been established. All required equipment has been purchased with installation scheduled for November 2017. DSHS’s Office of Forensic Mental Health Services continues to meet with county judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys to discuss use of this technology for forensic competency evaluations. Superior Court Judges, Municipal and District Court Judges, and Island Co. Judges have been briefed on the project. A legal and technical feasibility review of videoconferencing-based competency evaluations has been conducted and published.</p>
<p><b>Authority</b></p>	<p>Chapter 10.77 Revised Code of Washington outlines the requirements for competency services and the establishment of the Office of Forensic Mental Health Services.</p>
<p><b>Budget</b></p>	<p>The videoconferencing equipment was purchased in the 2015-17 biennium with the Governor’s Behavioral Health Innovation Account funding. DSHS’s Behavioral Health Administration is requesting one-time installation and training GF-State funding as well as ongoing operation and maintenance funding in the FY 2018 Supplemental Budget.</p>
<p><b>Rates</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Numbers Served</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Partners</b></p>	<p>Island Co. Jail, Grays Harbor Co. Jail, Yakima Co. Dept. Corrections (Jail), Snohomish Co. Jail.</p>

<b>Oversight</b>	N/A
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