



Office of Behavioral Health Advocacy (OBHA)

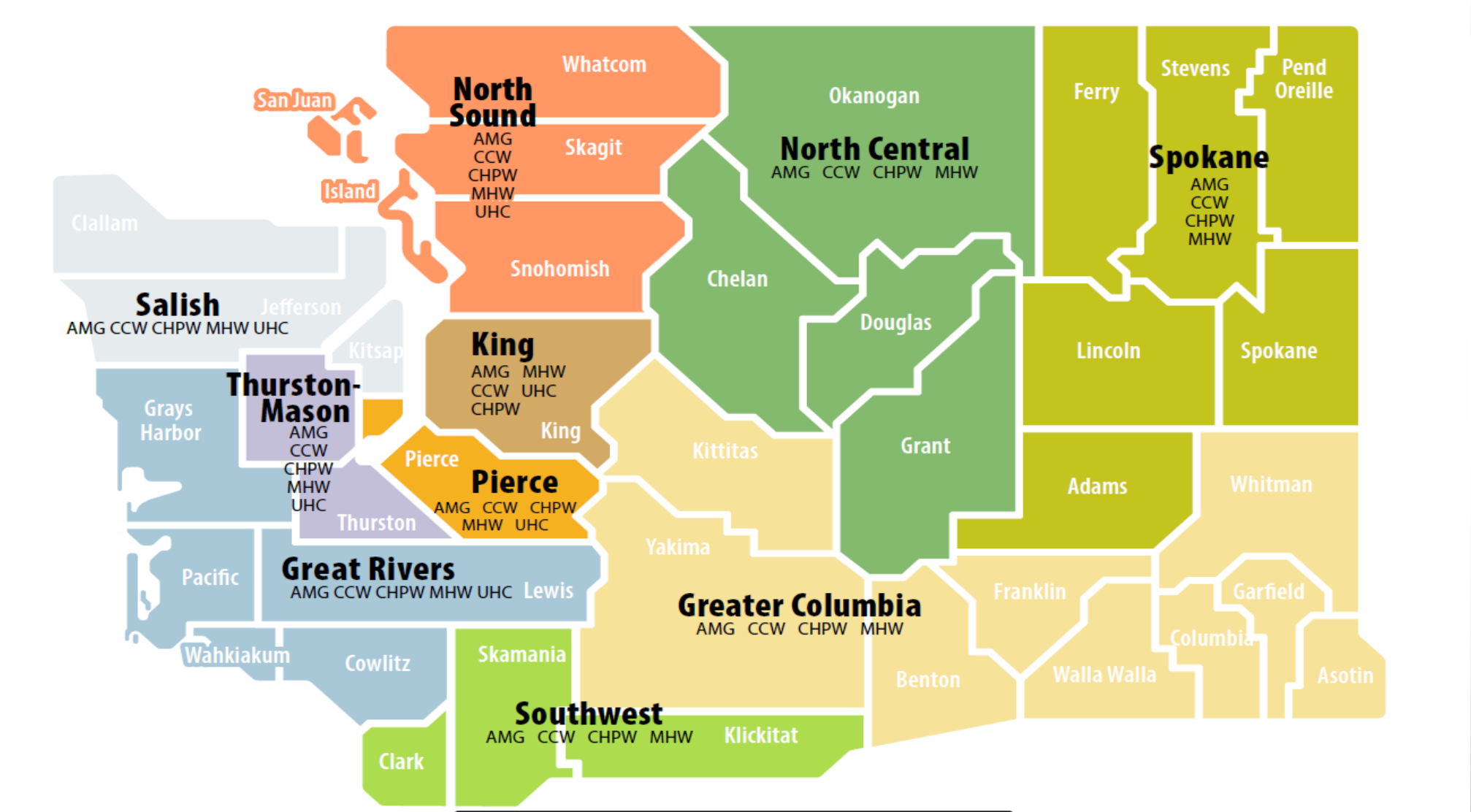
Overview of OBHA

- May 2021, HB 1086 passed (chapter 202, Laws of 2021). This bill transferred oversight of the Ombuds services from HCA to the Department of Commerce to create the OBHA
- July 2022, Peer Washington was awarded the OBHA contract from the Department of Commerce. We started building the program according to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 71.40
- On October 1, 2022, the behavioral health ombuds services transitioned from the Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization (BH ASO) to the OBHA
- OBHA ensures that Behavioral Health Advocate services are accessible in the ten regions identified by the managed care organizations across Washington State

History of Behavioral Health Ombuds

- Prior to October 1, 2022, the BH ASO provided the oversight and ensured their region had a Behavioral Health Ombuds service
- Services were provided in accordance with WAC 182-538D-0262
- BH Ombuds services had to be independent of the BH ASO
- BH ASOs contracted out the BH Ombuds service
 - Four regions were operated by non-profit organizations
 - Three regions were operated by an out-of-state BH organization
 - Three regions were operated under independent contract with the BH Ombuds Specialist

Service Locations



What is a Behavioral Health Advocate (BHA)?

- Formerly known as Behavioral Health Ombuds.
- Peer Washington employee who has lived experience of navigating within the behavioral health system.
- Will assist individuals and their supports with concerns they may have with:
 - services they are receiving
 - services previously received or are seeking services from a behavioral health service provider
 - barriers accessing behavioral health care

Behavioral Health Advocates (BHA)

- Uses a trauma-informed approach to enhance behavioral health awareness, promote self-empowerment, and increase access to services
- Assist individuals, families, and communities across WA State with behavioral health needs and concerns
- Services are provided to adults, youth, and families with minors
- Provide information and resources
- Assist with completing the Mental Health Advanced Directive

BHA Responsibilities

- Stays accessible to individuals, families, and other interested parties seeking assistance with behavioral health services
- Facilitate regional monthly forums
- Attend their regional BH-ASO Advisory Board, FYSPRT, and any community meetings
- Be available to attend provider and quality meetings when invited

BHA Responsibilities

- Promotes self-advocacy, empowering individual voice, and assists with developing not only confidence in their own voice, but a sense of empowerment through promoting ownership of their individual recovery plan and goals.
- Supports individuals with the information, tools, and resources they need to advocate on their own behalf, or when requested by the individual, to step in to mediate or advocate on an individual's behalf with a service provider

BHA Responsibilities

- Identify, investigate, and resolve
 - Complaint (Agency Level)
 - Grievance (Formal process at the funder level)
 - Appeal
 - Administrative Hearing process
 - Will include family members and their supports at the request of the individual receiving behavioral health services
- Educates individuals, advocates, service providers and the community about the complaint, grievance, and appeal process and the services of the BH Advocates

Categories of Complaints and Grievances

- Access
- Dignity and respect
- Quality/Appropriateness
- Patient rights
- Phone calls not returned
- Service intensity, not available or coordination of services
- Participation in treatment/consumer voice
- Physicians, ARNPs, and medications
- Financial and administrative services
- Residential
- Housing
- Emergency services
- Violation of confidentiality
- Other rights (interpreters, cultural differences, MHAD)

BHAs do not:



- Provide behavioral health therapy or case management
- Disclose information without written consent
- Ensure any specific outcome
- Give legal advice
- Enforce a recommendation

Who is Eligible?

- Any person applying for, eligible for, or receiving behavioral health services
- Family member and their supports
- All services are **FREE** of charge and **CONFIDENTIAL**

Eligibility

Criteria



OBHA Responsibilities

- Provides oversight of the services and operations of the Behavioral Health Advocate (formerly Behavioral Health Ombuds)
- All Team members are Peers with lived behavioral health experience
- Educates the community and service providers about the services of Behavioral Health Advocates (BHA)
- Ensures there are BHA services in each of the ten managed care regions
- Ensures there are BHA services in each of the ten managed care regions and accessible to anyone receiving or seeking behavioral health service regardless of funding

OBHA Responsibilities

- Provide consultation to the BHAs have the tools, and resources, provide consultation
- Statewide uniform reporting system
 - Analyze data relating to complaints and conditions provided by behavioral health providers and facilities
 - Monitor, develop, and recommend improvements in the implementation of Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, and policies.
- Establish a statewide advisory council
- Centralize website and toll-free phone number (no wrong door)

OBHA Responsibilities

- Certification training for BHAs
- Development and delivery of education programs and information on topics on but not limited to: (some virtual and some in person)
 - Mental Health Advanced Directives (MHAD)
 - Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP)
 - Crisis services and contacts
 - Peer services and supports
 - Family advocacy and rights
 - Family-initiated treatment and other behavioral health service options for minors
 - Involuntary treatment
 - Telling your story to the legislature

OBHA Working Agreements

- Develop a process and mutual working agreement to refer complaints regarding a behavioral health provider or facility to state and local agencies
 - Department of Health
 - State Hospitals (Western State, Eastern State, and Child Study)
 - Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
 - Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC)
- Develop a process and working agreement with (Note: all services are still self-directed)
 - Department of Corrections Ombuds
 - DDA Ombuds
 - LTC Ombuds
 - Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds
 - Protection and Advocacy Agency (Disability Rights Washington)

Questions?





Thank
you!!