



Oregon Health Authority Issues Mental Health Services Plan in Resolution of USDOJ Investigations

OHA has issued a Plan to improve mental health services for adults with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI). The Plan is being issued after lengthy discussions with the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ).

For several years, USDOJ investigated conditions at Oregon State Hospital. In 2010, the investigation expanded into whether Oregon's community mental health services were sufficient to avoid unnecessary institutionalization of adults with SPMI.

In November 2012, Oregon and the United States entered into a four-year agreement, under which Oregon would provide data about its services, assess gaps, and develop performance outcome measures. After extensive negotiations, Oregon Health Authority is now ready to proceed on its Performance Plan for Adults with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness. The Plan will address OHA's efforts in the next three years.

The USDOJ investigation of conditions at the Oregon State Hospital is now largely closed. The investigation has been pending since 2006. Numerous issues about Hospital conditions were raised and examined in the investigation. In the meantime, a new hospital was built and the State engaged in an extensive effort to improve treatment services there. At present, the only remaining issues in the USDOJ investigation of the Hospital are performance outcomes for the Hospital in the Plan, which essentially involve earlier discharges from the Hospital and improved linkages to community services.

During the last several years, Oregon also has engaged in a significant effort to transform its community mental health services. The Legislature has invested tens of millions of dollars in that effort. With the State's commitment to implement the Plan, USDOJ is suspending its investigation into the Oregon community mental health system for the next three years. The investigation is expected to terminate in 2019.

In the Plan, OHA commits to several performance outcome measures and to further data gathering and study of certain issues. Oregon also commits to quality and performance improvement measures, and to data reporting. These measures cover a broad array of subjects, including:

- Assertive Community Treatment Services, a form of treatment using multi-disciplinary teams (paragraphs D.1 to D.5);
- Crisis services (paragraphs D.6 to D.13);
- Supported housing (paragraphs D.14 to D.15);
- Peer-delivered services (paragraphs D.16 to D.18);
- Oregon State Hospital discharges and linkages to services paragraphs D.19 to D.26);
- Acute psychiatric care discharges and linkages to services (paragraphs D.27 to D.36);
- Emergency department services (paragraphs D.37 to D.44);
- Supported employment services (paragraphs D.45 to D.48);
- Secure Residential Treatment Facility discharges (paragraphs D.49 to D.50);
- Criminal Justice diversion (paragraphs D.51 to D.53);
- Quality and performance improvement (paragraphs E.1 to E.7); and
- Data reporting (paragraphs F.1 to F.6).

OHA has also hired an independent consultant to assess OHA's performance under the Plan. Pamela Hyde, the independent consultant, led the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration from 2009 to 2015. Before that, she also served for six years as Secretary of the New Mexico Human Services Department.