



February 12, 2016

**Re: General Information about Great Rivers Behavioral Health (GRBHO)**

The State of Washington Legislature passed two bills that will impact the way Medicaid and Medicare funded health services are administered and delivered in the State of Washington:

- **E2SBH 2572: As Passed Legislature 3/13/14** Pertains to the effectiveness of health care purchasing and transforming the health care delivery system. It intends to support full integration of physical health, mental health, and chemical dependency treatment by 2020, with the option for early adoption. Under this plan, the state will generate direct contracts with managed care organizations (insurance companies) to administer publicly funded physical health, mental health, and chemical dependency treatment services in the region (at least two contracts in each region).
- **E2SSB 6312: As Passed Legislature 3/12/14** Pertains to “An act relating to state purchasing of mental health and chemical dependency treatment services.” It intends to support the integration of mental health and chemical dependency treatment by April 2016, under a new organization called Behavioral Health Organizations (BHO), and subsequently the regions are expected achieve full integration with physical health by 2020.

The State of Washington has allowed counties to realign themselves into “service regions” and develop strategic plans to achieve the integration requirements by 2020, by either through a full integration process of the three health systems (physical, mental, substance use), or a progressive integration starting with integration of mental health and substance abuse systems effective April 1, 2016. The counties of Cowlitz, Lewis, Grays-Harbor, Pacific, and Wahkiakum have partnered through an inter-local agreement to form Great Rivers Behavioral Health Organization (GRBHO) and initiate the progressive integration of the health systems.

GRBHO is a public sector organization, led by a governing board composed by a County Commissioner from each of the counties it serves: Cowlitz, Lewis, Grays-Harbor, Pacific, and Wahkiakum (covering south-central and western region). GRBHO will administer the funding and oversee the delivery of Medicaid and other publicly funded health services in the region, while pursuing the goal of integrated health systems. And, by integrated systems we mean:

- Integrated Administration – administrative efficiency and cost savings
- Integrated Healthcare – Coordinated approach to the delivery of health care, considering the whole individual (body, mind and other co-occurring and impacting needs)

Following the execution of the interlocal agreement between the counties of Cowlitz, Lewis, Grays-Harbor, Pacific, and Wahkiakum, and the formation of its governing board, it has established a plan to develop and implement the merger of the existing agencies and the creation of this new agency. This effort is being attained via the collaboration of a team of county and existing agency representatives, as well as consultants. Staff employed for GRBHO during the agency development prior to April 1, 2016 will be employed by any one of the three merging agencies: Timberland Regional Support Network, Cowlitz County Regional Support Network/Cowlitz County, and Grays Harbor Regional Support Network/Grays Harbor County, and will have the benefits and conditions of employment under these agencies.

We expect that the commitment, hard work and collaboration of these individuals and entities will result in a well-structured agency with a vision and mission to guide it towards the future of healthcare for the low income and vulnerable populations in the region it serves.

Likewise, we hope to attract and hire individuals with the appreciation and support of our mission, and bring their skills and hard work to fulfill each other’s goals. To attract such individuals, GRBHO is committed to providing its employees with:

- an attractive and competitive compensation and benefits package;
- a workplace built on the foundation of respect and inclusion – that values the contribution that each staff brings to the organization and promotes their development;
- an employer that entrusts and empowers its staff with the flexibility to meet their job’s expectations and GRBHO goals, while meeting personal and family preferences and commitments, and to devise plans and solutions to achieve improvement, meet goals and solve problems or difficulties;
- a workplace where staff look forward to coming to work, because it is more than earning an income; it is the fulfillment of their own professional aspirations while being part of a great team for a worthy cause and mission.