

OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSUMER ADVOCACY

The creation of the statewide Office of Behavioral Health Consumer Advocacy, [HB1086](#), is a critical component in strengthening and providing access to Washington's behavioral health services - at a time when our state needs it now more than ever.

WHAT WILL THE OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSUMER ADVOCACY DO?

Offer critical services to people using our state's behavioral health system.

- Consolidate ten existing regional offices and provide consumers with a single point of access to allow for easier access and streamlined service across the state while maintaining localized support;
- Advocate for consumers of the publicly funded behavioral health system and offer services such as finding or changing providers, making sure services were paid for, and identifying and resolving complaints;
- Work in cooperation with other statewide agencies representing consumers to promote coordinated services.

Over **1.5 million people** will benefit from the new office

Support individuals during inpatient care.

- Serve as a patient advocate for individuals in psychiatric units in hospitals; ensuring patients receive appropriate treatment, while respecting their legal rights.

Approximately **2,000 people** use hospital inpatient mental health care monthly.

Bolster accountability and improvements within the system.

- Improve independence from the payers to ensure that consumers get the best services;
- Establish a statewide advisory council comprised of people with lived experiences, peers, family members and providers;
- Provide feedback and recommendations on systemic improvements to the governor's office and the legislature.

Integrate existing local offices.

- Retain the current ombuds to ensure a smooth transition of the people they serve;
- Integrate existing regional behavioral health ombuds into the new statewide program - ensuring a local connection to services.

CONTACT: MELANIE SMITH, LOBBYIST, SMITH.MELANIEJ@GMAIL.COM

KATHERINE SEIBEL, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY, KSEIBEL@NAMIWA.ORG