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.

**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.

**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.

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Over 1.5 million people will benefit from the new office.

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