

**RCW 71.24.025 Definitions.** Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "23-hour crisis relief center" means a community-based facility or portion of a facility which is licensed or certified by the department of health and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, offering access to mental health and substance use care for no more than 23 hours and 59 minutes at a time per patient, and which accepts all behavioral health crisis walk-ins drop-offs from first responders, and individuals referred through the 988 system regardless of behavioral health acuity, and meets the requirements under RCW 71.24.916.

(2) "988 crisis hotline" means the universal telephone number within the United States designated for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system operating through the national suicide prevention lifeline.

(3) "Acutely mentally ill" means a condition which is limited to a short-term severe crisis episode of:

(a) A mental disorder as defined in RCW 71.05.020 or, in the case of a child, as defined in RCW 71.34.020;

(b) Being gravely disabled as defined in RCW 71.05.020 or, in the case of a child, a gravely disabled minor as defined in RCW 71.34.020; or

(c) Presenting a likelihood of serious harm as defined in RCW 71.05.020 or, in the case of a child, as defined in RCW 71.34.020.

(4) "Alcoholism" means a disease, characterized by a dependency on alcoholic beverages, loss of control over the amount and circumstances of use, symptoms of tolerance, physiological or psychological withdrawal, or both, if use is reduced or discontinued, and impairment of health or disruption of social or economic functioning.

(5) "Approved substance use disorder treatment program" means a program for persons with a substance use disorder provided by a treatment program licensed or certified by the department as meeting standards adopted under this chapter.

(6) "Authority" means the Washington state health care authority.

(7) "Available resources" means funds appropriated for the purpose of providing community behavioral health programs, federal funds, except those provided according to Title XIX of the Social Security Act, and state funds appropriated under this chapter or chapter 71.05 RCW by the legislature during any biennium for the purpose of providing residential services, resource management services, community support services, and other behavioral health services. This does not include funds appropriated for the purpose of operating and administering the state psychiatric hospitals.

(8) "Behavioral health administrative services organization" means an entity contracted with the authority to administer behavioral health services and programs under RCW 71.24.381, including crisis services and administration of chapter 71.05 RCW, the involuntary treatment act, for all individuals in a defined regional service area.

(9) "Behavioral health aide" means a counselor, health educator, and advocate who helps address individual and community-based behavioral health needs, including those related to alcohol, drug, and tobacco abuse as well as mental health problems such as grief, depression, suicide, and related issues and is certified by a community health aide program of the Indian health service or one or

more tribes or tribal organizations consistent with the provisions of 25 U.S.C. Sec. 16161 and RCW 43.71B.010 (7) and (8).

(10) "Behavioral health provider" means a person licensed under chapter 18.57, 18.71, 18.71A, 18.83, 18.205, 18.225, or 18.79 RCW, as it applies to registered nurses and \*advanced registered nurse practitioners.

(11) "Behavioral health services" means mental health services, substance use disorder treatment services, and co-occurring disorder treatment services as described in this chapter and chapter 71.36 RCW that, depending on the type of service, are provided by licensed or certified behavioral health agencies, behavioral health providers, or integrated into other health care providers.

(12) "Child" means a person under the age of 18 years.

(13) "Chronically mentally ill adult" or "adult who is chronically mentally ill" means an adult who has a mental disorder and meets at least one of the following criteria:

(a) Has undergone two or more episodes of hospital care for a mental disorder within the preceding two years; or

(b) Has experienced a continuous behavioral health hospitalization or residential treatment exceeding six months' duration within the preceding year; or

(c) Has been unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any mental disorder which has lasted for a continuous period of not less than 12 months. "Substantial gainful activity" shall be defined by the authority by rule consistent with Public Law 92-603, as amended.

(14) "Clubhouse" means a community-based program that provides rehabilitation services and is licensed or certified by the department.

(15) "Community behavioral health program" means all expenditures, services, activities, or programs, including reasonable administration and overhead, designed and conducted to prevent or treat substance use disorder, mental illness, or both in the community behavioral health system.

(16) "Community behavioral health service delivery system" means public, private, or tribal agencies that provide services specifically to persons with mental disorders, substance use disorders, or both, as defined under RCW 71.05.020 and receive funding from public sources.

(17) "Community support services" means services authorized, planned, and coordinated through resource management services including, at a minimum, assessment, diagnosis, emergency crisis intervention available 24 hours, seven days a week, prescreening determinations for persons who are mentally ill being considered for placement in nursing homes as required by federal law, screening for patients being considered for admission to residential services, diagnosis and treatment for children who are acutely mentally ill or severely emotionally or behaviorally disturbed discovered under screening through the federal Title XIX early and periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment program, investigation, legal, and other nonresidential services under chapter 71.05 RCW, case management services, psychiatric treatment including medication supervision, counseling, psychotherapy, assuring transfer of relevant patient information between service providers, recovery services, and other services determined by behavioral health administrative services organizations.

(18) "Community-based crisis team" means a team that is part of an emergency medical services agency, a fire service agency, a public

health agency, a medical facility, a nonprofit crisis response provider, or a city or county government entity, other than a law enforcement agency, that provides the on-site community-based interventions of a mobile rapid response crisis team for individuals who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

(19) "Consensus-based" means a program or practice that has general support among treatment providers and experts, based on experience or professional literature, and may have anecdotal or case study support, or that is agreed but not possible to perform studies with random assignment and controlled groups.

(20) "Coordinated regional behavioral health crisis response system" means the coordinated operation of 988 call centers, regional crisis lines, certified public safety telecommunicators, and other behavioral health crisis system partners within each regional service area.

(21) "County authority" means the board of county commissioners, county council, or county executive having authority to establish a behavioral health administrative services organization, or two or more of the county authorities specified in this subsection which have entered into an agreement to establish a behavioral health administrative services organization.

(22) "Crisis stabilization services" means services such as 23-hour crisis relief centers, crisis stabilization units, short-term respite facilities, peer-run respite services, and same-day walk-in behavioral health services, including within the overall crisis system components that operate like hospital emergency departments that accept all walk-ins, and ambulance, fire, and police drop-offs, or determine the need for involuntary hospitalization of an individual.

(23) "Crisis stabilization unit" has the same meaning as under RCW 71.05.020.

(24) "Department" means the department of health.

(25) "Designated 988 contact hub" or "988 contact hub" means a state-designated contact center that streamlines clinical interventions and access to resources for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis and participates in the national suicide prevention lifeline network to respond to statewide or regional 988 contacts that meets the requirements of RCW 71.24.890.

(26) "Designated crisis responder" has the same meaning as in RCW 71.05.020.

(27) "Director" means the director of the authority.

(28) "Drug addiction" means a disease characterized by a dependency on psychoactive chemicals, loss of control over the amount and circumstances of use, symptoms of tolerance, physiological or psychological withdrawal, or both, if use is reduced or discontinued, and impairment of health or disruption of social or economic functioning.

(29) "Early adopter" means a regional service area for which all of the county authorities have requested that the authority purchase medical and behavioral health services through a managed care health system as defined under RCW 71.24.380(7).

(30) "Emerging best practice" or "promising practice" means a program or practice that, based on statistical analyses or a well established theory of change, shows potential for meeting the evidence-based or research-based criteria, which may include the use of a program that is evidence-based for outcomes other than those listed in subsection (31) of this section.

(31) "Evidence-based" means a program or practice that has been tested in heterogeneous or intended populations with multiple randomized, or statistically controlled evaluations, or both; or one large multiple site randomized, or statistically controlled evaluation, or both, where the weight of the evidence from a systemic review demonstrates sustained improvements in at least one outcome. "Evidence-based" also means a program or practice that can be implemented with a set of procedures to allow successful replication in Washington and, when possible, is determined to be cost-beneficial.

(32) "First responders" includes ambulance, fire, mobile rapid response crisis team, coresponder team, designated crisis responder, fire department mobile integrated health team, community assistance referral and education services program under RCW 35.21.930, and law enforcement personnel.

(33) "Immediate jeopardy" means a situation in which the licensed or certified behavioral health agency's noncompliance with one or more statutory or regulatory requirements has placed the health and safety of patients in its care at risk for serious injury, serious harm, serious impairment, or death.

(34) "Indian health care provider" means a health care program operated by the Indian health service or by a tribe, tribal organization, or urban Indian organization as those terms are defined in the Indian health care improvement act (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1603).

(35) "Intensive behavioral health treatment facility" means a community-based specialized residential treatment facility for individuals with behavioral health conditions, including individuals discharging from or being diverted from state and local hospitals, whose impairment or behaviors do not meet, or no longer meet, criteria for involuntary inpatient commitment under chapter 71.05 RCW, but whose care needs cannot be met in other community-based placement settings.

(36) "Licensed or certified behavioral health agency" means:

(a) An entity licensed or certified according to this chapter or chapter 71.05 RCW;

(b) An entity deemed to meet state minimum standards as a result of accreditation by a recognized behavioral health accrediting body recognized and having a current agreement with the department; or

(c) An entity with a tribal attestation that it meets state minimum standards for a licensed or certified behavioral health agency.

(37) "Licensed physician" means a person licensed to practice medicine or osteopathic medicine and surgery in the state of Washington.

(38) "Long-term inpatient care" means inpatient services for persons committed for, or voluntarily receiving intensive treatment for, periods of ninety days or greater under chapter 71.05 RCW. "Long-term inpatient care" as used in this chapter does not include: (a) Services for individuals committed under chapter 71.05 RCW who are receiving services pursuant to a conditional release or a court-ordered less restrictive alternative to detention; or (b) services for individuals voluntarily receiving less restrictive alternative treatment on the grounds of the state hospital.

(39) "Managed care organization" means an organization, having a certificate of authority or certificate of registration from the office of the insurance commissioner, that contracts with the authority under a comprehensive risk contract to provide prepaid

health care services to enrollees under the authority's managed care programs under chapter 74.09 RCW.

(40) "Mental health peer-run respite center" means a peer-run program to serve individuals in need of voluntary, short-term, noncrisis services that focus on recovery and wellness.

(41) Mental health "treatment records" include registration and all other records concerning persons who are receiving or who at any time have received services for mental illness, which are maintained by the department of social and health services or the authority, by behavioral health administrative services organizations and their staffs, by managed care organizations and their staffs, or by treatment facilities. "Treatment records" do not include notes or records maintained for personal use by a person providing treatment services for the entities listed in this subsection, or a treatment facility if the notes or records are not available to others.

(42) "Mentally ill persons," "persons who are mentally ill," and "the mentally ill" mean persons and conditions defined in subsections (3), (13), (51), and (52) of this section.

(43) "Mobile rapid response crisis team" means a team that provides professional on-site community-based intervention such as outreach, de-escalation, stabilization, resource connection, and follow-up support for individuals who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis, that shall include certified peer counselors as a best practice to the extent practicable based on workforce availability, and that meets standards for response times established by the authority.

(44) "Recovery" means a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

(45) "Regional crisis line" means the behavioral health crisis hotline in each regional service area which provides crisis response services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year including but not limited to dispatch of mobile rapid response crisis teams, community-based crisis teams, and designated crisis responders.

(46) "Research-based" means a program or practice that has been tested with a single randomized, or statistically controlled evaluation, or both, demonstrating sustained desirable outcomes; or where the weight of the evidence from a systemic review supports sustained outcomes as described in subsection (31) of this section but does not meet the full criteria for evidence-based.

(47) "Residential services" means a complete range of residences and supports authorized by resource management services and which may involve a facility, a distinct part thereof, or services which support community living, for persons who are acutely mentally ill, adults who are chronically mentally ill, children who are severely emotionally disturbed, or adults who are seriously disturbed and determined by the behavioral health administrative services organization or managed care organization to be at risk of becoming acutely or chronically mentally ill. The services shall include at least evaluation and treatment services as defined in chapter 71.05 RCW, acute crisis respite care, long-term adaptive and rehabilitative care, and supervised and supported living services, and shall also include any residential services developed to service persons who are mentally ill in nursing homes, residential treatment facilities, assisted living facilities, and adult family homes, and may include outpatient services provided as an element in a package of services in a supported housing model. Residential services for children in out-of-home placements related to

their mental disorder shall not include the costs of food and shelter, except for children's long-term residential facilities existing prior to January 1, 1991.

(48) "Resilience" means the personal and community qualities that enable individuals to rebound from adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other stresses, and to live productive lives.

(49) "Resource management services" mean the planning, coordination, and authorization of residential services and community support services administered pursuant to an individual service plan for: (a) Adults and children who are acutely mentally ill; (b) adults who are chronically mentally ill; (c) children who are severely emotionally disturbed; or (d) adults who are seriously disturbed and determined by a behavioral health administrative services organization or managed care organization to be at risk of becoming acutely or chronically mentally ill. Such planning, coordination, and authorization shall include mental health screening for children eligible under the federal Title XIX early and periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment program. Resource management services include seven day a week, 24 hour a day availability of information regarding enrollment of adults and children who are mentally ill in services and their individual service plan to designated crisis responders, evaluation and treatment facilities, and others as determined by the behavioral health administrative services organization or managed care organization, as applicable.

(50) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of health.

(51) "Seriously disturbed person" means a person who:

(a) Is gravely disabled or presents a likelihood of serious harm to himself or herself or others, or to the property of others, as a result of a mental disorder as defined in chapter 71.05 RCW;

(b) Has been on conditional release status, or under a less restrictive alternative order, at some time during the preceding two years from an evaluation and treatment facility or a state mental health hospital;

(c) Has a mental disorder which causes major impairment in several areas of daily living;

(d) Exhibits suicidal preoccupation or attempts; or

(e) Is a child diagnosed by a mental health professional, as defined in chapter 71.34 RCW, as experiencing a mental disorder which is clearly interfering with the child's functioning in family or school or with peers or is clearly interfering with the child's personality development and learning.

(52) "Severely emotionally disturbed child" or "child who is severely emotionally disturbed" means a child who has been determined by the behavioral health administrative services organization or managed care organization, if applicable, to be experiencing a mental disorder as defined in chapter 71.34 RCW, including those mental disorders that result in a behavioral or conduct disorder, that is clearly interfering with the child's functioning in family or school or with peers and who meets at least one of the following criteria:

(a) Has undergone inpatient treatment or placement outside of the home related to a mental disorder within the last two years;

(b) Has undergone involuntary treatment under chapter 71.34 RCW within the last two years;

(c) Is currently served by at least one of the following child-serving systems: Juvenile justice, child-protection/welfare, special education, or developmental disabilities;

(d) Is at risk of escalating maladjustment due to:

- (i) Chronic family dysfunction involving a caretaker who is mentally ill or inadequate;
- (ii) Changes in custodial adult;
- (iii) Going to, residing in, or returning from any placement outside of the home, for example, behavioral health hospital, short-term inpatient, residential treatment, group or foster home, or a correctional facility;
- (iv) Subject to repeated physical abuse or neglect;
- (v) Drug or alcohol abuse; or
- (vi) Homelessness.

(53) "State minimum standards" means minimum requirements established by rules adopted and necessary to implement this chapter by:

- (a) The authority for:
  - (i) Delivery of mental health and substance use disorder services; and
  - (ii) Community support services and resource management services;
- (b) The department of health for:
  - (i) Licensed or certified behavioral health agencies for the purpose of providing mental health or substance use disorder programs and services, or both;
  - (ii) Licensed behavioral health providers for the provision of mental health or substance use disorder services, or both; and
  - (iii) Residential services.

(54) "Substance use disorder" means a cluster of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms indicating that an individual continues using the substance despite significant substance-related problems. The diagnosis of a substance use disorder is based on a pathological pattern of behaviors related to the use of the substances.

(55) "Tribe," for the purposes of this section, means a federally recognized Indian tribe. [2024 c 368 s 2; 2024 c 367 s 1; 2024 c 121 s 25. Prior: 2023 c 454 s 1; 2023 c 433 s 1; prior: 2021 c 302 s 402; (2021 c 302 s 401 expired July 1, 2022); prior: 2020 c 256 s 201; 2020 c 80 s 52; prior: 2019 c 325 s 1004; 2019 c 324 s 2; 2018 c 201 s 4002; prior: 2016 sp.s. c 29 s 502; 2016 sp.s. c 29 s 501; 2016 c 155 s 12; prior: 2014 c 225 s 10; 2013 c 338 s 5; 2012 c 10 s 59; 2008 c 261 s 2; 2007 c 414 s 1; 2006 c 333 s 104; prior: 2005 c 504 s 105; 2005 c 503 s 2; 2001 c 323 s 8; 1999 c 10 s 2; 1997 c 112 s 38; 1995 c 96 s 4; prior: 1994 sp.s. c 9 s 748; 1994 c 204 s 1; 1991 c 306 s 2; 1989 c 205 s 2; 1986 c 274 s 2; 1982 c 204 s 3.]

**Reviser's note:** \*(1) The term "advanced registered nurse practitioner" was changed to "advanced practice registered nurse" by 2024 c 239 s 1, effective June 30, 2027.

(2) The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

(3) This section was amended by 2024 c 121 s 25, 2024 c 367 s 1, and by 2024 c 368 s 2, without reference to one another. All amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Effective date—2021 c 302 s 402:** "Section 402 of this act takes effect July 1, 2022." [2021 c 302 s 407.]

**Expiration date—2021 c 302 s 401:** "Section 401 of this act expires July 1, 2022." [2021 c 302 s 406.]

**Findings—Intent—2021 c 302:** See note following RCW 71.24.890.

**Effective date—2020 c 80 ss 12-59:** See note following RCW 7.68.030.

**Intent—2020 c 80:** See note following RCW 18.71A.010.

**Effective date—2019 c 325:** See note following RCW 71.24.011.

**Findings—Intent—2019 c 324:** See note following RCW 71.24.648.

**Mental health drop-in center services pilot program—2019 c 324:** See note following RCW 71.24.649.

**Report—2019 c 324:** See note following RCW 70.38.111.

**Recommendations—Residential intensive behavioral health and developmental disability services—2019 c 324:** See note following RCW 74.39A.030.

**Findings—Intent—Effective date—2018 c 201:** See notes following RCW 41.05.018.

**Effective dates—2016 sp.s. c 29:** See note following RCW 71.05.760.

**Short title—Right of action—2016 sp.s. c 29:** See notes following RCW 71.05.010.

**Effective date—2014 c 225:** See note following RCW 71.24.016.

**Application—2012 c 10:** See note following RCW 18.20.010.

**Intent—Findings—2008 c 261:** "In the event that an existing regional support network will no longer be contracting to provide services, it is the intent of the legislature to provide flexibility to the department to facilitate a stable transition which avoids disruption of services to consumers and families, maximizes efficiency and public safety, and maintains the integrity of the public mental health system. By granting this authority and flexibility, the legislature finds that the department will be able to maximize purchasing power within allocated resources and attract high quality organizations with optimal infrastructure to perform regional support network functions through competitive procurement processes. The legislature intends for the department of social and health services to partner with political subdivisions and other entities to provide quality, coordinated, and integrated services to address the needs of individuals with behavioral health needs." [2008 c 261 s 1.]

**Finding—Purpose—Intent—Severability—Part headings not law—Effective dates—2006 c 333:** See notes following RCW 71.24.016.

**Findings—Intent—Severability—Application—Construction—Captions, part headings, subheadings not law—Adoption of rules—Effective dates—2005 c 504:** See notes following RCW 71.05.027.



**Alphabetization—Correction of references—2005 c 504:** See note following RCW 71.05.020.

**Correction of references—Savings—Severability—2005 c 503:** See notes following RCW 71.24.015.

**Purpose—Intent—1999 c 10:** "The purpose of this act is to eliminate dates and provisions in chapter 71.24 RCW which are no longer needed. The legislature does not intend this act to make, and no provision of this act shall be construed as, a substantive change in the service delivery system or funding of the community mental health services law." [1999 c 10 s 1.]

**Alphabetization of section—1999 c 10 s 2:** "The code reviser shall alphabetize the definitions in RCW 71.24.025 and correct any cross-references." [1999 c 10 s 14.]

**Effective date—1995 c 96:** See note following RCW 71.24.400.

**Severability—Headings and captions not law—Effective date—1994 sp.s. c 9:** See RCW 18.79.900 through 18.79.902.

**Conflict with federal requirements—1991 c 306:** See note following RCW 71.24.015.

**Effective date—1986 c 274 ss 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9:** See note following RCW 71.24.015.