

RCW 71.24.455 Offenders with mental illnesses—Contracts for specialized access and services. (1) The director shall select and contract with a behavioral health administrative services organization, managed care organization, behavioral health agency, or private provider to provide specialized access and services to offenders with mental illness upon release from total confinement within the department of corrections who have been identified by the department of corrections and selected by the behavioral health administrative services organization, managed care organization, behavioral health agency, or private provider as high-priority clients for services and who meet service program entrance criteria. The program shall enroll no more than twenty-five offenders at any one time, or a number of offenders that can be accommodated within the appropriated funding level, and shall seek to fill any vacancies that occur.

(2) Criteria shall include a determination by department of corrections staff that:

(a) The offender suffers from a major mental illness and needs continued mental health treatment;

(b) The offender's previous crime or crimes have been determined by either the court or department of corrections staff to have been substantially influenced by the offender's mental illness;

(c) It is believed the offender will be less likely to commit further criminal acts if provided ongoing mental health care;

(d) The offender is unable or unlikely to obtain housing and/or treatment from other sources for any reason; and

(e) The offender has at least one year remaining before his or her sentence expires but is within six months of release to community housing and is currently housed within a work release facility or any department of corrections' division of prisons facility.

(3) The behavioral health administrative services organization, managed care organization, behavioral health agency, or private provider shall provide specialized access and services to the selected offenders. The services shall be aimed at lowering the risk of recidivism. An oversight committee composed of a representative of the authority, a representative of the selected managed care organization, behavioral health administrative services organization, or private provider, and a representative of the department of corrections shall develop policies to guide the pilot program, provide dispute resolution including making determinations as to when entrance criteria or required services may be waived in individual cases, advise the department of corrections and the managed care organization, behavioral health administrative services organization, or private provider on the selection of eligible offenders, and set minimum requirements for service contracts. The selected managed care organization, behavioral health administrative services organization, or private provider shall implement the policies and service contracts. The following services shall be provided:

(a) Intensive case management to include a full range of intensive community support and treatment in client-to-staff ratios of not more than ten offenders per case manager including: (i) A minimum of weekly group and weekly individual counseling; (ii) home visits by the program manager at least two times per month; and (iii) counseling focusing on maintaining and promoting ongoing stability, relapse prevention, and recovery.

(b) The case manager shall attempt to locate and procure housing appropriate to the living and clinical needs of the offender and as needed to maintain the psychiatric stability of the offender. The entire range of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing and involuntary hospitalization must be considered as available housing options. A housing subsidy may be provided to offenders to defray housing costs up to a maximum of six thousand six hundred dollars per offender per year and be administered by the case manager. Additional funding sources may be used to offset these costs when available.

(c) The case manager shall collaborate with the assigned prison, work release, or community corrections staff during release planning, prior to discharge, and in ongoing supervision of the offender while under the authority of the department of corrections.

(d) Medications including the full range of psychotropic medications including atypical antipsychotic medications may be required as a condition of the program. Medication prescription, medication monitoring, and counseling to support offender understanding, acceptance, and compliance with prescribed medication regimens must be included.

(e) A systematic effort to engage offenders to continuously involve themselves in current and long-term treatment and appropriate rehabilitative activities shall be made.

(f) Classes appropriate to the clinical and living needs of the offender and appropriate to his or her level of understanding.

(g) The case manager shall assist the offender in the application and qualification for entitlement funding, including medicaid, state assistance, and other available government and private assistance at any point that the offender is qualified and resources are available.

(h) The offender shall be provided access to daily activities such as drop-in centers, prevocational and vocational training and jobs, and volunteer activities.

(4) Once an offender has been selected into the pilot program, the offender shall remain in the program until the end of his or her sentence or unless the offender is released from the pilot program earlier by the department of corrections.

(5) Specialized training in the management and supervision of high-crime risk offenders with mental illness shall be provided to all participating mental health providers by the authority and the department of corrections prior to their participation in the program and as requested thereafter. [2019 c 325 s 1028; 2018 c 201 s 4029; 2014 c 225 s 43; 1997 c 342 s 2.]

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

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

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

Severability—1997 c 342: See note following RCW 71.24.450.