



North Sound Behavioral Health Organization, LLC

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12/7/2016
IPRTF
Steering Comm.
Anne Deacon

December 9, 2016

To: Members of the Legislature Representing Snohomish, Skagit, Island, San Juan, and Whatcom Counties.

RE: Request for Appropriation for the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization

Dear Members of the House and Senate:

As county leaders, we are writing to request that the 2017-19 state capital budget include an investment for retaining and expanding treatment beds throughout the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization region. As you know, on April 1, 2016 the North Sound Mental Health Administration was converted to the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (BHO). The BHO is responsible for managing public funding for Substance Use Disorder Services in addition to Mental Health Services. The North Sound Behavioral Health Organization serves a five county region: Snohomish, Skagit, Island, San Juan, and Whatcom counties.

There is a growing behavioral health crisis with urgent – and unmet – treatment needs in our five county region. To address this crisis, the North Sound BHO and the five counties it serves are pioneering an innovative, yet proven, approach to provide small-scale, localized treatment while working collaboratively across the counties to prioritize and maximize resources. Crucial to the success of this approach, the North Sound BHO is requesting state financial capital assistance to ensure the creation of additional and appropriate treatment facilities, specifically:

- To address the historical lack of substance use disorder residential treatment facilities within the North Sound Region;
- To address the increased demands for services due to population growth and expansion of the Medicaid caseload;
- To provide adequate treatment resources to address the growing opioid epidemic; and,
- To replace the beds following the end of the state's lease with Pioneer Center North and the North Sound Evaluation and Treatment Facility in June 2018.

The North Sound BHO, with support from all five counties, is requesting \$61.5 million over the next five years in order to phase in the funding and construction of the needed facilities. Ongoing operational funds for the expanded facilities will be provided from existing North Sound BHO resources. The North

Sound BHO respectfully requests that you include the following funding and proviso language in the 2017-19 capital budget:

\$32.5 million is appropriated to the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization to replace and expand treatment beds throughout Snohomish, Skagit, Island, San Juan, and Whatcom Counties. In identifying locations for treatment beds, the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization shall consider the Denny Juvenile Justice Center as a potential site.

This state investment combined with \$8.5 million of local funds, would result in a total of \$41 million to be invested into new treatment bed facilities over the course of the biennium. The proposed plan would include pursuing the remodeling of the Denny Juvenile Justice Center as a potential site; constructing a 16-bed acute detox center and a 16-bed mental health triage center to replace the current 16 bed triage/sub-acute detox center in Bellingham; a stabilization campus in Skagit County that would include the re-located evaluation and treatment center from Sedro Wooley and a 16-bed acute detox center; and additional life-saving treatment and facilities across the North Sound. Leadership for the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization will finalize and site these facilities as the funding and facilities plan is implemented.

We hope you will include an investment into the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization to address our urgent need for treatment in our counties.

Respectfully,

North Sound Behavioral Health Organization Executive Committee

Chair, Ken Dahlstedt
Skagit County Commissioner

Vice Chair, Jill Johnson
Island County Commissioner

Jamie Stephens
San Juan County Commissioner

Dave Somers
Snohomish County Executive

Sam Low
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Whatcom County Executive

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