

# Behavioral Health Organizations Fact Sheet

## What are Behavioral Health Organizations?

State law created Behavioral Health Organizations (BHOs) to purchase and administer public mental health and substance use disorder services under managed care. BHOs are single, local entities that assume responsibility and financial risk for providing substance use disorder treatment, and the mental health services previously overseen by the Regional Support Networks (RSNs). These include inpatient and outpatient treatment, involuntary treatment and crisis services, jail proviso services, and services funded by the federal block grants.

The state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) will begin the contracting process in 2015 for services starting April 2016.

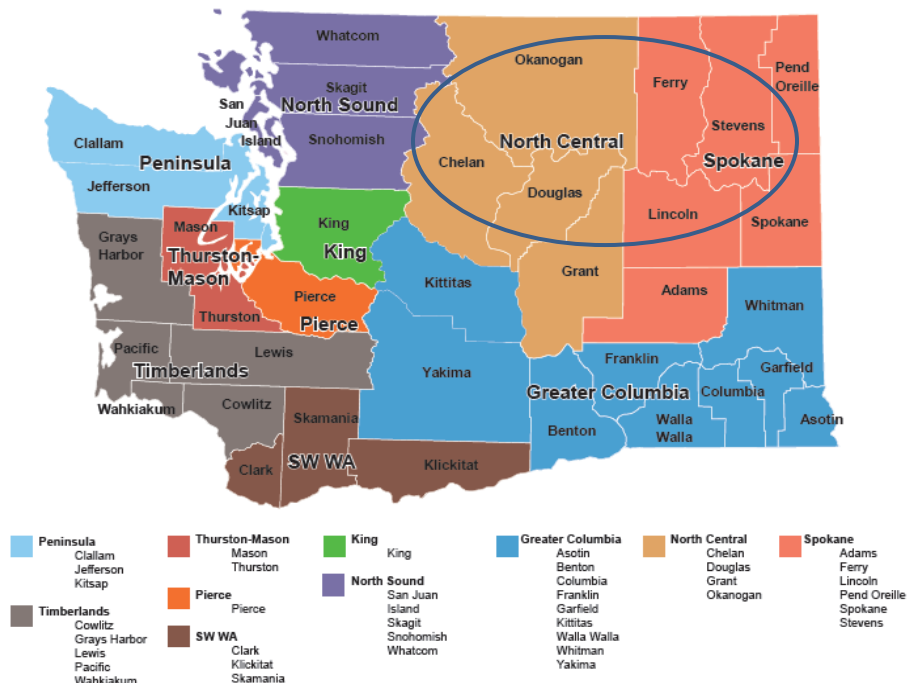
## Where are BHOs located?

BHOs will be located within newly formed Regional Service Areas. For the most part, there will be one BHO per Regional Service Area. One exception will be in Eastern Washington, where North Central and Spokane RSAs will constitute one BHO.

## What are Regional Service Areas and where will they be located?

Regional Service Areas (RSAs) define new geographical boundaries for the state to purchase behavioral and physical health care through managed care contracts. RSAs are geographic regions, not administrative authorities.

RSAs were authorized in 2014 legislation and include contiguous counties, contain at least 60,000 people on Medicaid, possess an adequate number of health care providers, and reflect natural and behavioral health service referral patterns. DSHS and the state Health Care Authority (HCA) jointly designated them in November 2014. HCA will contract with managed care health plans to provide physical healthcare within these regions.



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## What improvements do DSHS and HCA anticipate with BHOs and RSAs?

- Increased access to appropriate and effective services for mental health and substance use disorders for youth and adults who receive Medicaid.
- Behavioral and physical healthcare providers will have help to better meet the needs of the “whole person” and to remove barriers between the disciplines.
- Financial resources will be better managed.

## Are there other ways the state may change how health care is delivered?

Yes. While most RSAs will offer services through BHOs, some may choose to have the state contract with managed care health plans to purchase and administer care for mental health, substance use, and physical health in a combined benefit. These areas are referred to as “Early Adopters.” In these regions there will be no BHO and no RSN. HCA will hold the contracts with the managed care health plans, not DSHS.

More information about this model is available at the links below.

## Where can I get more information?

- The DSHS BHO Development web page: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bhsia/division-behavioral-health-and-recovery/developing-behavioral-health-organizations>
- The BHO Questions Mailbox: [BHOtransition@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:BHOtransition@dshs.wa.gov)
- HCA’s Integrated Behavioral and Physical Health Purchasing web page: [http://www.hca.wa.gov/hw/Pages/integrated\\_purchasing.aspx](http://www.hca.wa.gov/hw/Pages/integrated_purchasing.aspx)
- HCA’s Early Adopter Questions Mailbox: [EarlyAdopterQuestion@hca.wa.gov](mailto:EarlyAdopterQuestion@hca.wa.gov)