



## Policy Request

# Geographic Equity in Discharge from State Facilities

The City appreciates the State's recent efforts to move toward a more community-based behavioral health system. The City of Lakewood has long shouldered an inequitable share of the state's responsibility to treat and care for the mentally ill and sexually violent predators. This transition presents an opportunity to not only provide more accessible services to those who need it most, but also for the facilities to be more geographically disbursed.

Based on the findings from Commerce's Residential Facilities report, the State should invest in long term care and treatment facilities in all underserved regions of the state. Secondly, building upon the work of the Sex Offender Policy Board, the state should clarify that fair share principles apply to sexually violent predators released from state hospitals and secure community transition facilities.

### What is the problem?

Individuals are discharged from state facilities into less restrictive alternatives (LRAs) in Lakewood at an inequitable rate compared to other communities throughout the state, despite the individual's county of origin. Additionally, individuals are placed in LRAs that do not have the appropriate services to meet the individuals needs and/or protect public safety, which may jeopardize the safety of LRA staff and residents alike.

### Recent Examples:

- Accused murderer found not competent to stand trial but conditional release planned from Western State Hospital into the Lakewood community.
- A sexually violent predator, also classified as Level 3 sex offender, committed in Thurston County was released from the Special Commitment Center to an adult family home in Lakewood on the basis that adequate housing was not available in his county of commitment. He received treatment in King County.
- A sexually violent predator, also classified as Level 3 sex offender, committed in Spokane County was released from the Secure Community Transition Facility in Pierce County on the basis that return to his county of commitment would be inappropriate. He received treatment in Thurston County.
- A sexually violent predator, also classified as Level 3 sex offender, committed in Mason County was released from the Special Commitment Center to an adult family home in Lakewood.
- A man released from Western State Hospital to an adult family home in Lakewood was accused of assaulting a fellow resident, leading to his death.
- Level 3 sex offender who committed crimes in Okanagan and Spokane counties, determined likely to reoffend was planned to be released from Eastern State Hospital to an adult family home in Lakewood.

### Proposed Solutions:

- 1) Procure additional services (e.g. housing, mental healthcare, etc.) within a regional service area if existing services are not adequate. Consider incentivizing providers in underserved areas.
- 2) Institute fair share policies for discharge planning from state hospitals and secure community transition facilities (expand SB 5163 policies which only apply to the Special Commitment Center).
- 3) Disclose publicly accessible and relevant criminal history to service providers during the discharge planning process.
- 4) Implement Department of Health credential waivers for treatment providers working in underserved counties.

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