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## **North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization, LLC**

Section 1700 – Crisis Services: Regional Crisis Line

Authorizing Source: HCA Contract

Approved by: Executive Director      Date: 4/29/2025

Signature:

### **POLICY # 1731.00**

### **SUBJECT: REGIONAL CRISIS LINE**

#### **PURPOSE**

To outline Toll-Free Regional Crisis Line (RCL) services for the North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (North Sound BH-ASO).

#### **POLICY**

The North Sound BH-ASO maintains a 24-hour a day, 7 days a week, Toll-Free Regional Crisis Line (RCL) to provide crisis intervention and triage services, including screening and referral to a network of providers and community resources. RCL services are provided in accordance with Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 246-341-0670 Crisis telephone support services – Service standards.

#### Operational Requirements

In addition to meeting the general requirements for crisis services in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 246-341, North Sound BH-ASO's RCL must:

1. Have services available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week;
2. Assure communication and coordination with the individual's mental health or substance use treatment provider, if indicated and appropriate;
3. Remain on the phone with an individual in crisis in order to provide stabilization and support until the crisis is resolved or referral to another service is accomplished;
4. Have a written protocol for the referral of an individual to a voluntary or involuntary treatment facility for admission on a seven-day-a-week, twenty-four-hour-a-day basis, including arrangements for contacting Designated Crisis Responders (DCR);
5. Develop and implement policies and procedures for training staff to identify and assist individuals in crisis before assigning the staff to unsupervised duties; and
6. Post a copy of the statement of individual rights in a location visible to staff.

Documentation of a crisis telephone support service must include the following:

1. A brief summary of each service encounter, including the date, time, and duration of the encounter;
2. The names of the participants;
3. A follow-up plan or disposition, including any referrals for services, including emergency medical services;
4. Whether an individual has a crisis plan and any request to obtain the crisis plan; and
5. The name and credential, if applicable, of the staff person providing the service.
6. A behavioral health agency providing crisis telephone services for substance use disorder must

ensure a professional appropriately credentialed to provide substance use disorder treatment is available or on staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

#### Access to Qualified Clinicians

Toll-Free Crisis Line Services must be compliant with applicable staffing requirements in WAC 246-341, and include:

1. Training in crisis triage and management for individuals of all ages and behavioral health conditions, including Serious Mental Illness (SMI), substance use disorder (SUDs) and Co-occurring disorders;
2. Staff available for consultation 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week who have expertise in Behavioral Health conditions pertaining to children and families;
3. TDD/TTY services; and
4. Language assistance support.

#### Triage, Referral, and Dispatch Guidelines

RCL services will maintain triage, referral, and dispatch policies and protocols that assess the caller's need, determine the appropriate level of service, and connect individuals who have crisis behavioral healthcare needs in an expedited manner. North Sound BH-ASO's RCL maintains an internal system to review and revise agency protocols and coordinate with Mobile Rapid Response Crisis Teams (MRRCT), Community Based Crisis Teams (CBCT) and DCRs.

North Sound BH-ASO's RCL will maintain Triage and Referral protocols aligned with Regional Care Crisis Dispatch (RCCD) protocols (effective, July 2025) established by North Sound BH-ASO, and follow any requirements or guidelines established by the National Suicide Prevention Line (NSPL), the 988 system, Washington Tribal Hub, and Native & Strong Lifeline.

North Sound BH-ASO's RCL will support and coordinate as needed or requested HCA government-to-government Tribal Crisis Coordination Plans with DCRs, MRRCT or other appropriate entities.

Protocols for crisis triage and referral must, at a minimum:

1. Address all relevant behavioral health and substance abuse situations;
2. Address the urgency of an individual's clinical circumstances, including crisis situations and emergencies;
3. Define appropriate care settings based on the urgency of clinical circumstances and resources;
4. Coordinate referrals for dispatch of MRRCT, DCRs, or connect the individual to services;
5. Have licensed staff available to make triage and referral decisions that require clinical judgment (e.g., assessing a individual's potential for self-harm following a traumatic event and determining the appropriate level and intensity of care);
6. For Individuals enrolled with a MCO, assist in connecting the Individual with current or prior service providers; and
7. For Individuals who are American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN), assist in connecting the Individual to services available from a Tribal government or Indian Health Care Provider (IHCP).

#### **PROCEDURES**

North Sound BH-ASO's RCL provides Triage and referral services include:

1. Crisis Triage and Intervention to determine the urgency of the needs and identify the supports

- and services necessary to meet those needs;
- 2. Providing telephone consultation, intervention and stabilization for individuals, family members, or natural supports as appropriate and within limits of confidentiality;
- 3. Determining when face-to-face crisis response is needed, both voluntary and involuntary;
- 4. Monitor MRRCT or DCR response and MHP follow up care for Unavailable Detention Facility Reports (No Bed Reports);
- 5. Making referrals to age and culturally appropriate services and specialists;
- 6. Providing telephonic follow-up with individuals after hours as part of the individual crisis care plan; and
- 7. Providing communication and coordination with any provider, when indicated.

#### Crisis Call Center Standards

North Sound BH-ASO's RCL collects and analyzes data to measure its performance against behavioral healthcare telephone access standards. North Sound BH-ASO's RCL access standards are:

- 1. Telephones are answered by a live voice within 30 seconds 90% of the time; and
- 2. Telephone abandonment rates are within 5 percent.

#### Supervision and Oversight

North Sound BH-ASO's RCL has appropriate staff supervision and oversight for all triage and referral services. Staff who make clinical decisions are supervised by a licensed clinician qualifying as a Mental Health Professional (MHP). Please refer to North Sound BH-ASO Policy 1733.00 *Crisis Services General Requirements*.

- 1. North Sound BH-ASO's RCL fully participates in regional Crisis Leadership structures and all BH-ASO crisis services subcommittees and workgroups, responsible for establishing regional crisis system policies, procedures and documented protocols that are used by contractors.
- 2. North Sound BH-ASO's RCL is expected to ensure compliance with the North Sound BH-ASO's policies for encounter data submissions and to submit routine utilization deliverables to be included in quality committee activities.
- 3. North Sound BH-ASO will maintain delegation agreement with the RCL that are:
  - a. Mutually agreed upon;
  - b. Describes the delegated activities and the responsibilities of North Sound BH-ASO;
  - c. Requires at least semi-annual reporting;
  - d. Describes the process by which North Sound BH-ASO evaluates performance; and
  - e. Describes the remedies available to North Sound BH-ASO its delegate does not fulfill its obligations, including revocation of the delegation agreement.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

None