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

Section 1700 – Crisis Services: Crisis Services Regional Quality Assurance and Improvement

Authorizing Source: HCA Contract

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

### **POLICY # 1732.00**

### **SUBJECT: CRISIS SERVICES REGIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT**

#### **PURPOSE**

Policy to outline North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization's (North Sound BH-ASO) oversight responsibilities and quality improvement activities for Crisis Services in the North Sound Region.

#### **POLICY**

North Sound BH-ASO ensures the provision of behavioral health crisis, triage, and referral services in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties. North Sound BH-ASO's oversight includes conducting monitoring, on-site auditing, quality assurance and improvement activities for all behavioral health Mobile Rapid Response Crisis Teams (MRRCT), Community Based Crisis Teams (CBCT), Designated Crisis Responders (DCRs), and Regional Crisis Line (RCL) services. This policy is to provide an overview of North Sound BH-ASO's mission to ensure providers of crisis services are compliant with contracts, Revised Codes of Washington (RCWs), Washington Administrative Code (WAC), state protocols, federal regulations, and applicable North Sound BH-ASO policies.

#### **REGIONAL CRISIS CONTINUUM**

North Sound BH-ASO's regional crisis services are a network of behavioral health crisis services, behavioral health outreach programs and urgent receiving facilities that are available 24-hour a day, seven (7) a week intended to stabilize the individual while utilizing the least restrictive community settings possible. Crisis system services and programs include, but are not limited to:

1. Regional Crisis Line (RCL);
2. Mobile Rapid Response Crisis Teams (MRRCT) and Community Based Crisis Teams (CBCT);
3. Designated Crisis Responders (DCRs);
4. Facility based Crisis Stabilization and Withdrawal Management; and
5. Behavioral Health Law Enforcement (LE) Co-Responder Programs.

North Sound BH-ASO Care Management and Coordination for individuals receiving crisis services are outlined in Policy #1597.00 *Care Management and Coordination*.

#### **PROGRAM and SERVICE OVERSIGHT**

North Sound BH-ASO's oversight activities include:

1. Quality Management (QM) Program;
2. Program and Provider Monitoring;
3. Onsite Quality Reviews;
4. Designated Crisis Responder (DCR) Credentialing;
5. Delegate and Provider Internal Reviews;

6. Policy and Protocol Workgroups;
7. Community Information and Education Planning; and
8. Delegation.

North Sound BH-ASO's Medical Director provides oversight of contracted provider network, operations, policy and supports informed medical and behavioral health decisions.

### **Quality Management**

Quality assurance and improvement activities are in accordance with North Sound BH-ASO's Quality Management (QM) Plan and include oversight from North Sound BH-ASO's Internal Quality Management Committee (IQMC). Quality Management activities include the following elements:

1. GFS/FBG requirements according to HCA contract and meets crisis services performance measures;
2. Goals and interventions to improve the quality of care received;
3. Services to culturally and linguistically diverse individuals;
4. Inclusion of individual voice and experiences which may include feedback and grievance data from statewide Behavioral Health Advocate program;
5. Inclusion of provider voice and experience, which may include feedback through involvement in contractor committees, provider complaints, and provider appeals; and
6. Involvement of the contractors Behavioral Health Medical Director in the QM program.

North Sound BH-ASO shall participate in a BHAB and attend meetings as required by established bylaws.

North Sound BH-ASO's Medical Director participates in the HCA or MCO meetings and policy development on emerging technologies for the treatment of behavioral health conditions and related decisions. North Sound BH-ASO shall also have a child or adolescent psychiatrist available for consultation related to the treatment of behavioral health conditions in children and Youth.

North Sound BH-ASO shall participate with HCA in all Quality Review activities at the request of HCA.

### **Provider and Program Monitoring**

Monitoring of services ensures appropriate utilization and regional sustainability of least restrictive settings for behavioral health crisis and stabilization services. Monitoring activities span North Sound BH-ASO's Clinical Oversight Team (COT), Information Systems (IS), Fiscal and Contract departments. North Sound BH-ASO develops compliance and quality driven processes for each program or contractor which is routinely evaluated against best practices.

Performance monitoring activities include:

1. Agency or program performance metrics to include access, response, and service outcomes; and
2. Agency or program adherence to relevant Revised Code of Washington (RCW), Washington Administrative Code (WAC), HCA and North Sound BH-ASO contract requirements or other applicable standards.

North Sound BH-ASO and our contract providers shall coordinate individual experience data and information when requested. Member experience data may include, for example:

1. Data from complaints, survey results, or customer service outcomes; and
2. Service outcome data, to include effectiveness of care, access/availability, utilization/resource use and member experience of care.

## Onsite Quality Reviews

North Sound BH-ASO conducts a variety of quality reviews of services against relevant RCW, WAC, state or federal rule regulations and ensures all crisis service and programs are aligned with:

1. National Best Practice Guidelines;
2. Health Care Authority Best Practice Guidelines; Established State or Regional MRRCT and DCR Protocols.

Onsite quality reviews may include:

1. **Quality Review Reports:** provides a finding summary and the BHA and/or regional compliance rates for each standard; and/or
2. **Remedial Actions:** applied in circumstance in which quality or compliance standards are not met and additional actions by the provider or subdelegate need to be addressed. All remedial actions are evaluated by IQMC.

North Sound BH-ASO contracted agencies and providers are required to meet current credentialing standards and laws. Routine agency audits are conducted by North Sound BH-ASO to ensure providers of crisis services are credentialed and licensed to provide behavioral health crisis services. North Sound BH-ASO requires its contracted agencies to comply with staffing requirements in accordance with all applicable WAC 246-341 standards.

## Designated Crisis Responder (DCR) Credentialing

North Sound BH-ASO will comply with Designated Crisis Responder (DCR) qualification requirements in accordance with Chapters 71.05 and 71.34 RCW and will incorporate the statewide DCR Protocols, listed on the Health Care Authority (HCA) website, into the practice of their DCRs.

1. North Sound BH-ASO provides designation to all Regional Service Area (RSA) DCRs or confirms if the designation process is retained by the County under the authority of the North Sound BH-ASO Interlocal Agreement or by a Tribal Authority under as defined in HCA contract.
2. BHA's seeking DCR designation provide the following documentation for review:
  - a. Attestation that the individual meets experience criteria in RCW 71.05.
  - b. Active WA License, Qualifying Degree, or MHP designation documents.
  - c. Copy of DCR Academy registration or certificate.
  - d. Attestation of BHA training made available or provided in compliance with RCW 71.05 or state DCR protocols.
  - e. Professional Ethics training documentation within the past 24 months.
  - f. DOH approved Suicide Prevention training documentation within the past 24 months.
  - g. Any additional supporting documentation to support the application.
  - h. Any additional supporting documentation requested during the designation process.
3. North Sound BH-ASO reviews all documentation submitted.
4. North Sound BH-ASO verifies eligibility based on information provided.
5. Each designee and the affiliated agency will receive a written letter of designation upon completion of document review which will occur within 15 calendar days.
  - a. Absence of qualifications will result in written notification of denial of designation.
6. North Sound BH-ASO DCR designation (or the County's confirmed designation) will be reported to its Credentialing Committee where it is endorsed and tracked.

Additional delegate and provider credentialing requirements are found in North Sound BH-ASO Administrative Policy #1026.00 *Organizational Provider Credentialing*.

### **Delegate and Provider's Internal Review Expectations**

North Sound BH-ASO expects all agencies and providers to conduct internal review processes to ensure all services meet administrative and clinical standards. Agency internal review processes may include, but are not limited to:

1. Interrater reliability assessments of triage and referral decisions;
2. Routine monitoring of crisis access and response metrics;
3. Quality improvement and reporting mechanisms; and
4. Licensure and credential reviews.

### **Policy and Protocol Workgroups**

North Sound BH-ASO establishes policies and protocols in collaboration with our contracted providers to ensure all policies and protocols are compliant with State and Federal regulations or standards and are responsive to the needs identified by providers of crisis services.

### **Crisis System Reporting – State Reporting**

North Sound BH-ASO maintains and provides crisis system monitoring and utilization reports on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual cadence as outlined in HCA-ASO contracts. North Sound BH-ASO's Annual Crisis Assessment must include, but not limited to:

1. A summary and analysis about the North Sound region's crisis system, to include information from the quarterly Crisis System Metrics Report, callers funding sources (Medicaid, non-Medicaid, other) and caller demographics including age, gender, and ethnicity.
2. A summary of crisis system coordination activities with external entities, including successes and challenges. External entities addressed in the summary must include but are not limited to regional MCOs, community behavioral health providers, First Responders, partners within the criminal justice system, and Tribal entities.
3. A summary of how Individuals' crisis prevention plans are used to inform DCRs dispatched on crisis visits, reduce unnecessary crisis system utilization and maintain the Individual's stability. Include in the summary an analysis of the consistency of use and effectiveness of the crisis prevention plans.
4. Provide a summary of the development, implementation, and outcomes of activities and strategies used to improve the crisis system to include:
  - a. An overview and analysis of available information and data about the disposition of Crisis calls;
  - b. The annual costs to operate the regional crisis line and a breakdown of the number of calls, by Medicaid and non-Medicaid, to the regional crisis line for the year.
  - c. Coordination of referral to provider agencies or MCOs for case management, awareness of frequent crisis line caller and reduction of law enforcement involvement with the crisis system
  - d. A description of how crisis system data is used throughout the year, including the use of information from community partners about the crisis system effectiveness;
  - e. Any systemic changes to the crisis system planned in the upcoming year as a result of the information and data.

### **Behavioral Health Services**

North Sound BH-ASO has established standardized Utilization Management (UM) program for non-crisis behavioral services funded solely or in part through General Funds-State (GFS). North Sound BH-ASO has

established policies that outline UM methodology for determining when GFS resources are available and outline the level of care guidelines for making authorization determinations. Please refer to North Sound BH-ASO Policy #3045.00 *Eligibility Verification*, Policy 1594.00 *Utilization Management*, and Policy #1571.00 *Authorization for Payment of Psychiatric Inpatient Services for General Funds – State*.

### **Community Information and Education**

North Sound BH-ASO maintains a Community Information and Education Plan (CIEP) to educate and inform community stakeholders about the crisis system. Community information and education activities reflect individual and family voice and ensures residents of the North Sound Region have access to clear information on how to access crisis services and what service can be provided. North Sound BH-ASO's CIEP activities are incorporated into our broader quality management improvement activities.

### **Delegation**

North Sound BH-ASO delegates certain responsibilities to ensure compliance with all crisis system operational requirements. All delegation agreements will be mutually agreed upon and will describe the specific delegated activities and responsibilities.

North Sound BH-ASO requires any delegated organization to fulfill specific deliverables and ensures the provision of Protected Health Information (PHI) as specified in the BH-ASO delegation agreement and business associate agreement.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None