

WHAT IS THE THURSTON-MASON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OMBUDS SERVICE?

The State of Washington has established an independent Ombuds service to receive inquiries, comments, concerns, and grievances from mental health and substance use disorder clients whose services are paid for by Medicaid. Contact can be initiated by clients, their family members or other interested parties. The Ombuds will determine how to proceed with an issue based on Washington State and Federal laws.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS SERVICE?

The service is designed to resolve issues quickly, impartially and in the best possible way. The Ombuds receives information concerning the quality of service and client satisfaction and assists in resolving issues confidentially. The Ombuds' primary goal is to help clients and providers work together to ensure dignified, timely and quality service and to assure that client rights are protected.

WHO CAN USE THIS SERVICE?

Residents of Thurston and Mason Counties who are eligible to receive or are receiving Medicaid funded mental health and/or substance use disorder services may use the Ombuds service.

WHAT THE OMBUDS CAN DO

- **Listen** to your problem.
- **Address all issues** according to Washington State and Federal Laws.
- **Analyze** what is involved and help you determine an appropriate solution.
- **Assure that your concerns are heard** in the way in which you want them heard, clearly and without judgment.
- **Explain and investigate** facts, laws, policies and procedures.
- **Advocate** for your behavioral health treatment choices and rights.
- **Mediate** to resolve the problem consistent with Washington State law.
- **Assist in resolution of a grievance** on behalf of a consumer receiving TMBHO behavioral health services until the matter is resolved, if authorized by the consumer.
- **Assist with the appeal process** to address Adverse Benefit Determination of a denial, termination, suspension or reduction of services.
- **Assist family and community members** in addressing issues with publically funded behavioral health services.
- **Assist** with Administrative Hearings.
- **Provide information and referral** on resources and your rights.
- **Remain in contact** with you to see that you are kept informed until the issue or grievance is resolved.
- **Recommend changes** to correct a problem or prevent future occurrences.
- **Maintain your confidentiality.**
- **Act as an Authorized Representative** in clients' behalf in grievances and appeals if requested and legally authorized.

WHAT THE OMBUDS CANNOT DO

- Provide counseling, substance use disorder treatment, or other therapeutic services.
- Insist that a TMBHO funded provider provide case management or other services, if not deemed medically necessary by a TMBHO provider agency.
- Provide case management services directly. However, the Ombuds **CAN** assist in providing information and referral or assist with a grievance that may help a consumer get his or her case management needs met.
- Use your name without consent.
- Provide medical opinion and/or make a recommendation for a particular medication. However, the Ombuds **CAN** assist you in the request for a second opinion.
- Enforce a recommendation or ensure any specific outcome. However, the Ombuds **CAN** make a recommendation to a TMBHO provider agency or the TMBHO directly.
- Give legal advice or act as your attorney.



WHAT IS AN OMBUDS?

An Ombuds provides information and referral and assists in resolving issues with your Medicaid funded TMBHO mental health or substance use disorder provider, as well as with the TMBHO itself. The Ombuds can also assist with preparing a Mental Health Advance Directive.

WHAT IS A MENTAL HEALTH ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

A Mental Health Advance Directive is a binding legal document that allows you to make decisions and express your wishes about your mental health treatment in advance, including medications, short term admission to inpatient treatment and other issues. It also provides an opportunity, if you choose, to appoint an 'agent' to make treatment decisions for you and specifies which decisions and in what way.

HOW TO PREPARE A MENTAL HEALTH ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

An Ombuds will assist with preparing this document with anyone that is a mental health consumer receiving services through a TMBHO provider agency presently or in the past. You will meet with the Ombuds for approximately two hours and complete the documents. The Ombuds will then make copies and get the documents to you in their finalized form.

The Ombuds is functionally independent from the TMBHO or any of its provider agencies. However, the Ombuds functions under the geographic jurisdiction of the Thurston-Mason Behavioral Health Organization LLC (TMBHO) and performs duties in accordance with State law.

The TMBHO is responsible for providing the Medicaid behavioral health funding and contracts with behavioral health provider agencies. These provider agencies are contracted with the TMBHO to provide medically necessary mental health and substance use disorder services for consumers enrolled in the Medicaid

HOW CAN I CONTACT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OMBUDS?

Office: 360-763-5793 or 800-658-4105

Cell: 360-280-7656

Fax: 360-584-9745

TTY: 7-1-1 or 1-800-833-6388

Address: Thurston-Mason Behavioral Health Organization LLC
612 Woodland Square Loop SE
Suite 401

Lacey, WA 98503

E-mail: theOmbuds@tmbho.org

A person receiving a Medicaid behavioral health benefit may request a Medicaid Benefits Handbook from their service provider or by calling TMBHO at 360-763-5828.

The Benefits Handbook has a list of individual client rights. These rights can also be found under WAC 388-877-0600 and 388-877-0680.

THURSTON-MASON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OMBUDS

A Behavioral Health Ombuds is available to assist clients of Medicaid funded Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder services in Thurston and Mason Counties to:

- Resolve concerns and grievances
- Provide information and referral
- Assist with Mental Health Advance Directives
- Assist with Appeal and Administrative Hearings pertaining to their behavioral health services

**Quickly*

**Confidentially*

**Free of charge*

