



## Memorandum

**TO:** JACK LOUWS  
**FROM:** Chris Phillips, Behavioral Health Advisory Committee Chair  
**DATE:** June 7, 2019  
**RE:** Annual Report to County Council on the Behavioral Health Program Fund

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County Code 2.44 requires the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee to provide an annual report to County Council that highlights programs funded by the Behavioral Health Program Fund supported by sales tax monies. Attached is the 2018 report that will be presented to County Council at their June 18, 2019 meeting.

With Health Department staff guidance and support, the committee uses the PITA (Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Aftercare) continuum of care to discuss system successes, gaps and funding needs. The ordinance that established the Behavioral Health Program Fund and the Advisory Committee places priority on 1) emergency department and jail diversion; 2) access to behavioral health services; 3) supportive services where people live; and 4) early intervention and health promotion services for children and families.

Accordingly, the committee has allocated funding to support a program designed for high utilizing more difficult to serve clients (i.e. the GRACE program), development of the new Crisis Stabilization Facility, expansion of youth services in North County, and continued funding for supportive housing programming.

Whatcom County is privileged to have great community partners that provide an array of effective services to residents challenged with behavioral health concerns. The sales tax dollars support services in all seven school districts, and they have allowed the development of specialty court services, and 24/7 on-site support for housing programs that offer a home to residents who are living with serious mental illness or substance use disorders. The Behavioral Health Program Fund, made possible by the sales tax dollars, has been a catalyst for innovation in responding to the continued needs of the community.

As in years past, the county has been fortunate to receive grant funding to support some programs that were initially supported by the sales tax. The result of this short-term grant funding is the underspending of the budget and a reinvestment into the program fund. The county has also been fortunate to have some of the direct costs of administering the fund supported by other sources. This additional support will end in 2020, but allowed for a temporary reinvestment to the fund balance for the 2018 reporting year as well as 2019.

