



# **North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization: Three Year Update**

**Prepared for:  
Whatcom County  
Public Works and Health Committee  
May 10, 2022**

# Presentation Goals

- What is the North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization [BH-ASO]?
- Brief History
- Overview of Programs
- Crisis Services
- How do BH-ASO Programs Affect Counties?
- Legislative Priorities

# What is the North Sound BH-ASO?

- One of seven (7) County-Administered Regional BH-ASOs
- Health Care Authority contracts with BH-ASOs to administer Crisis Services and other non-Medicaid behavioral health programs
- The North Sound BH-ASO is a Limited Liability Corporation administered by the five counties through an interlocal agreement
- County Elected Officials serve on the Board of Directors [attached]
- An Advisory Board is composed of at least 51% of its members with lived experience. There are also two law enforcement representatives

# Brief History

Milestone Date	Event
1988	Legislation to create “Regional Support Networks” [RSNs] to administer community based mental health services
1989	Five (5) North Sound counties sign the first Interlocal Agreement to create North Sound RSN
1994	State creates a Medicaid “capitated” financing system allocating a fixed amount of funding for each person on Medicaid
2006	Mental health financing moved to a managed care model – RSNs “at risk” for hospital costs
2016	State integrates Medicaid funding for both Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services – RSNs are converted to Behavioral Health Organizations. North Sound BHO is re-organized as Limited Liability Corporation – new Interlocal Agreement Signed
July 2019	Medicaid funding for behavioral health services moved to the 5 Medicaid Managed Care Organizations – the North Sound BHO is converted to a BH-ASO. Interlocal Agreement is updated.

# North Sound BH-ASO Budget: 2018 - 2022

## Operating

North Sound BH-ASO 2022 Operating Budget:

<https://nsbhaso.org/who-we-are/boards-and-committees/board-of-directors>

Year	Revenues
2018 Adopted	\$147,775,296
2020 Adopted	\$24,619,370
2021 Amended	\$31,338,766
2022 Adopted	\$38,951,174

# North Sound BH-ASO Budget: Fund Sources

## Operating

- Medicaid – capitated reimbursements from MCOs for Crisis Services
- State General Fund – Flexible
- State General Fund – Provisos
- Federal Mental Health Block Grant
- Federal Substance Abuse Block Grant
- Department of Commerce Housing Assistance
- Federal Opioid Treatment Grant

# North Sound BH-ASO Programs: Crisis Services

- 24-hour crisis line operated by Volunteers of America
- Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams – Snohomish County Human Services and Compass Health
- Involuntary Treatment Commitment Services provide by Designated Crisis Responders
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Crisis Stabilization Facilities
- (2) Evaluation & Treatment Facilities
- Involuntary Hospitalization

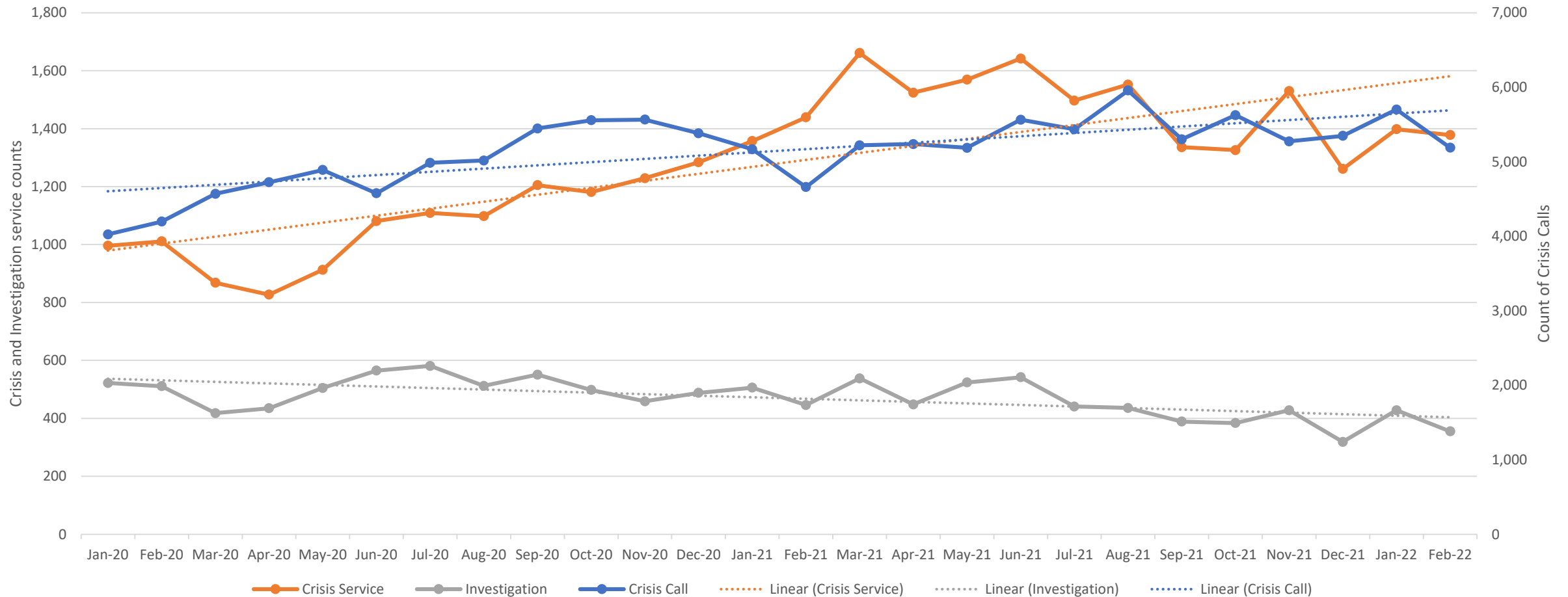
# North Sound BH-ASO Programs: Non-Medicaid Services

- Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment
- Inpatient Residential Treatment
- Community Outreach and Co-Responder
- Case Management Services
- Jail Transition and Diversion Services
- Psychiatric Hospital Transition Services
- Pregnant and Parenting Housing Support Services
- Housing Rental Assistance and Case Management Services



# Crisis Services: 2020 – 2022

North Sound BH-ASO Crisis Data - dates Jan-20 to Feb-22



# How do BH-ASO Programs Counties?

## Affect

- Over \$38 million investment in regional behavioral health programs
- Supports sustainability of the behavioral health network of agencies and facilities – including county owned behavioral health facilities for which the former NS BHO provided \$6 million seed money
- BH-ASO funding complements programs funded with county local dollars such as 1/10 of 1% dollars
- BH-ASO funded crisis services and community outreach programs help divert persons from jail and hospitals

# How do BH-ASO Programs Counties?

Affect

- Improve and support the coordination of behavioral health services with First Responders
- Outreach and engagement with homeless persons struggling with behavioral health problems such as substance abuse
- Reduction in suicide risk and violent behaviors due to behavioral health disorders

# Challenges Facing the and Counties

BH-ASO

- Behavioral Health Workforce Shortages
- Lingering affect of COVID on behavioral health – especially among youth
- Continued high rates of Opioid and polysubstance abuse addiction
- Continued high rates of homelessness and shortages of supportive housing
- Fragmented behavioral health system – lack of coordination between Medicaid funding, State General Fund, Federal Block Grant and County local dollars

# Legislative Priorities

- Provide dedicated funding to pay for Involuntary Commitment Hearing Court Costs
- Ensuring network adequacy for behavioral health services in all areas
- Fully utilize the historical expertise of BH-ASOs and Counties in designing the new 988 system
- Provide more flexibility to combine new programs with existing programs
- Assess existing workforce and provider capacity when creating new programs

# Questions?

## Contact Information:

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Note: The current *North Sound BH-ASO Board of Directors Roster* has been included as a separate attachment for your reference.



*Empowering individuals  
and families to improve  
their health and  
well-being.*

Serving Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom Counties