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## **Peninsula facility to open mental health crisis center Thursday**

By Rob Ollikainen

Peninsula Daily News

PORT ANGELES — Peninsula Behavioral Health is opening a six-bed crisis stabilization center for mental health patients who are in need of immediate local care.

The Clallam County Respite Center will be dedicated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Peninsula Behavioral Health, 118 E. Eighth St., at 3:15 p.m. Thursday.

An open house will be held from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The new facility at 112 E. Eighth St. is located in the former St. Vincent de Paul thrift store.

The respite center for acute psychiatric patients will provide intensive care on a voluntary basis to residents in an unlocked neighborhood setting, Peninsula Behavioral Health officials said.

### **Lack of beds**

It opens as the state continues to grapple with a shortage of psychiatric beds.

Patients in Clallam County have been sent to hospitals as far as Bellingham and Longview.

More than 36 percent of these patients have been held for days on end at Olympic Medical Center because of a lack of available psychiatric beds, Peninsula Behavioral Health officials said.

The respite center will reduce costly inpatient treatment and take pressure off families, the OMC emergency room, local law enforcement and the Clallam County jail, officials said.

### **Court ruling**

Meanwhile, the state Supreme Court in August banned the practice of boarding mentally ill patients in hospital emergency rooms without psychiatric treatment, ruling that the practice violated the state's Involuntary Treatment Act.

A 120-day stay on the ruling expires Dec. 26.

“In the wake of the state Supreme Court ruling that determined patients can no longer be boarded at the hospital without behavioral health treatment, Peninsula Behavioral Health can now offer a more intense level of intervention before a patient's crisis reaches the point of requiring psychiatric hospitalization,” said Peter Casey, Peninsula Behavioral Health executive director.

“By intervening sooner, Peninsula Behavioral Health will decrease the chances of ER boarding or a patient being transferred to treatment hundreds of miles away at PBH's expense.”

### **Funding from sales tax**

The respite center is supported by a one-tenth-of-1 percent sales tax that helps agencies provide mental health or chemical dependency services.

The state Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery contributed \$353,500 to the respite center's operations and \$54,000 for capital, officials said.

Clallam County provided \$200,000 for capital and \$38,000 for operations.

OMC contributed \$60,000 for capital, and private donations from community members accounted for an additional \$27,000, Peninsula Behavioral Health officials said.

RSVPs for the ribbon-cutting ceremony are appreciated to 360-457-0431, ext. 139, or [developmentoffice@peninsulabehavioral.org](mailto:developmentoffice@peninsulabehavioral.org).

For more information on Peninsula Behavioral Health, visit [www.peninsulabehavioral.org](http://www.peninsulabehavioral.org).

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