

Washington state buys shuttered psychiatric hospital in Tukwila

Cascade Behavioral Health's parent company closed the 137-bed facility last month. Now the state hopes the acquisition will expand treatment options.

By [Joseph O'Sullivan](#)
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Cascade Behavioral Health in Tukwila closed last month. The facility was purchased by the state. (Genna Martin/Crosscut)

Washington state officials are buying a recently shuttered for-profit psychiatric hospital in Tukwila in an attempt to shore up the state's struggling mental health system.

The purchase of the Cascade Behavioral Health facility, which closed last month, will prevent the loss of more treatment beds amid a long-running shortage of psychiatric treatment options.

Funding for the \$29.9 million purchase comes out of the state Department of Social and Health Service's current budget, according to agency spokesperson Tyler Hemstreet. "Any additional funding will be through a supplemental funding request" to the Legislature, he wrote in an email.

The facility offered inpatient and outpatient treatment for adults for both mental-health issues and substance-use disorder, [according to the website](#) of Acadia Healthcare, the company that owned the hospital. A call seeking comment from the Tennessee-based company wasn't returned.

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The purchase comes as Gov. Jay Inslee's administration continues to struggle to reshape and expand capacity in Washington's long-troubled mental-health system.

The state continues to accrue fines as it remains out of compliance with a 2015 federal court ruling known as [the Trueblood decision](#), which found that Washington was creating excessive wait times for criminal defendants in custody [needing competency evaluations to see if they can stand trial](#). Western State Hospital, the state's largest psychiatric facility, was decertified by federal regulators in 2018 [after a host of concerns](#), and state officials have been working to unwind parts of Western State while building a new facility on its Lakewood campus and opening additional mental-health facilities elsewhere. Among other things, state officials have also struggled with a shortage of mental health workers.

Under state operation, the facility – which was licensed for 137 beds – will be used for patients moving through Washington's civil commitment system, according to Hemstreet. That will then open space for more patients needing competency and restoration services at Western State Hospital, he added.

"At a minimum, it will be 100 beds," Hemstreet wrote in an email. "That number could rise as we gradually finish phased renovation projects on a couple of the wards." The hospital is expected to be staffed by a mix of contract workers, new hires and staffers transferring from elsewhere.

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News of the closure of Cascade Behavioral Health was broken by The Seattle Times, which reported the [state's purchase of it on Monday](#). Inslee's office, [which hailed the purchase Wednesday in a blog post](#), referred all questions to the Department of Social and Health Services.

In a statement, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW President Jane Hopkins praised state officials for buying the facility. The union represented workers at Cascade, and concessions after a three-month strike in 2021 [over safety concerns](#).

"The acquisition transfers the administration of this much-needed psychiatric facility out of the hands of profit-oriented, out-of-state entity Acadia Healthcare into the hands of the public," Hopkins said in prepared remarks. "It represents a significant stride toward accountable care."

About the Authors & Contributors



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