
NORTH SOUND MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**OMBUDS AND QUALITY REVIEW TEAM (QRT) SERVICES****I. PURPOSE**

Ombuds, when requested, investigate and advocate on behalf of consumers while working to resolve any complaint regarding mental health services for service recipients.

QRTs are responsible for independently reviewing the performance of the regional support network and its service providers.

WHATCOM COUNTY shall assure:

- a. Ombuds and QRT have access to the WHATCOM COUNTY and all subcontractors regarding:
 - i. The quality of care provided to public mental health consumers;
 - ii. The degree to which services are service recipient focused/directed;
 - iii. WHATCOM COUNTY quality management activities;
 - iv. The extent of development of alternatives to hospitalizations, cross-system coordination and range of treatment options; and
- b. Ombuds and QRT shall have the authority to enter into a WHATCOM COUNTY facility for purposes of outreach, fact finding, assessing systemic customer service issues, and to resolve individual complaints or systemic issues related to the contracted services, provided that reasonable time, notice, and confidentiality requirements are met.
- c. Ombuds and QRT shall have access to WHATCOM COUNTY personnel for purposes of outreach, fact-finding, assessing systemic consumer service issues, and to resolve individual complaints or systemic issues related to the contracted services, provided that reasonable time, notice, and confidentiality requirements are met.
- d. Assure Ombuds and QRT have the ability to perform their duties free of retaliation and demonstrate effective intervention on behalf of Ombuds should retaliation issues arise.

II. PROCEDURE

Ombuds and QRT submit semi-annual reports for broad distribution to at least the following stakeholders:

- a. WHATCOM COUNTY Administrator/Governing Board/Advisory Board
- b. Local consumer/family advocate groups
- c. Service Area mental health advisory boards
- d. Public mental health providers
- e. MHD

WHATCOM COUNTY and all subcontractors shall consider Ombuds and QRT findings and reports in good faith. WHATCOM COUNTY and subcontractors shall demonstrate how Ombuds reports, recommendations and findings are analyzed, and how decisions are made regarding follow-up activities and interventions, as well as, demonstrate how issues are addressed and incorporated into ongoing operations, including but not limited to, contracting activities and other management decisions.