



2024-2025 Q1 Report: July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024

Overview

This quarter, OBHA continued to expand its physical presence, establishing new offices across several regions. The Southwest office celebrated its full setup with an open house and town hall. Attendance at the open house was lower than hoped, but the experience provided valuable insights and lessons to apply to open houses at other locations. The Great Rivers, North Sound, and King County regions secured leases and began the setup process, with open houses scheduled for next quarter. These expansions mark a significant milestone as OBHA’s staff had primarily worked from home until now.

Additionally, OBHA experienced substantial staff changes, operating at 50% capacity due to Behavioral Health Advocates taking personal time off but maintaining service continuity through cross-regional support. As of the quarter’s end, OBHA anticipates a return to full staffing, with several new hires onboarding across Advocacy Coordinator (AC) and Behavioral Health Advocate (BHA) roles.

Cases, Complaints, and Grievances Summary

The following table breaks out the numbers of inquiries received and active cases over Q1 by region.

Table 1. Break-out of Cases, Complaints, and Grievances by Region

Region	Case #	Info Request	Complaints	Complaints Escalated to Grievance	Grievances *	Out of Jurisdiction	Case Status: Open	Complaints/Grievances	
								Status: Resolved	Status: Unresolved
State Office	49	44				5	5		
Great Rivers	16	16					3		
Greater Columbia	14	14							
King County	77	76	1				3		1
North Central	11	11					1		
North Sound	36	36					3		
Pierce County	30	30					4		
Salish	21	21					1		
SW Region	46	45	1				0		1
Spokane	48	42	5			1	13	1	2
Thurston /Mason	32						0		
Total	380	335	7			6	33	1	4

* This category includes only those cases initially filed as grievances, not complaints escalated to grievances.

Complaint Type by Provider and Facility Type

The following table breaks out the types of complaints and grievances by provider and facility type during the quarter.

Table 2. Complaints by Provider and Facility Type by Region

Region	Total Per Region	Provider Type				Facility Type			
		MH Adult	SUD Adult	MH Youth	SUD Youth	MH Adult	SUD Adult	MH Youth	SUD Youth
State Office									
Great Rivers									
Greater Columbia									
King County	1					1			
North Central									
North Sound									
Pierce County									
Salish									
SW	2					1			
Spokane	6					3	3		
Thurston/Mason									
Total	9					5	3		

Complaints and grievances dealt with during this quarter fell into the following issue areas:

- Access: 1
- Dignity and Respect: 4
- Quality/Appropriateness of Services: 5
- Patient Rights: 3
- Calls Not Returned: 1
- Payee Services:
- Housing:
- Physicians, ARNPS, and Medications: 3
- Residential Services:
- Transportation:
- Other:

Complaint Examples

The following are examples of complaints received by OBHA over the quarter including actions taken and resolution.

State Office: A parent seeking support for their adult child who had a negative experience at an inpatient SUD facility was connected with resources to help them find an appropriate treatment center. OBHA’s Program Manager provided guidance, leading the parent to successfully transition their child to a supportive environment.

Great Rivers Region: An individual expressed frustration with the lack of clear information on their involuntary hold. The Behavioral Health Advocate provided clarification on the involuntary treatment process and connected them with a social worker to facilitate better understanding and communication.

Greater Columbia: A participant voiced concerns about long wait times and limited provider options for their adult child needing behavioral health services. OBHA directed the individual to regional support services and provided information on telehealth alternatives.

King County: A case highlighted delayed responses from behavioral health providers, impacting timely treatment. OBHA advocated for better follow-up protocols and connected the individual to resources to expedite service access.

North Central: An OBHA advocate assisted a crisis provider dealing with the eviction of a vulnerable individual from supportive housing while the person was hospitalized. The advocate facilitated a coordination meeting between crisis response teams and local long-term care advocates.

North Sound: A community member requested support navigating restricted access to their loved one in a behavioral health facility. OBHA advised them on patient rights and provided guidance on formalizing communication arrangements with the facility.

Pierce County: OBHA received reports of challenges accessing behavioral health resources for youth, especially given the region's shortage of inpatient beds. The advocate facilitated referrals to community-based youth programs, and follow-up efforts are underway.

Salish Region: A complaint was raised about the lack of culturally appropriate behavioral health options for Tribal youth. OBHA is working with community members to connect families with culturally informed care providers in the area.

Southwest: A parent sought resources for their child on the autism spectrum and was assisted by OBHA in obtaining telecare and in-home support through a regional provider. The parent expressed appreciation for the advocate's efforts in securing these services.

Spokane: An individual with mobility limitations and recent recovery from SUD expressed fear of relapse due to isolation. OBHA connected them with Community Living Connections to ensure access to meal services and reliable transport for appointments.

Thurston/Mason: OBHA assisted an individual struggling with the effects of extreme heat on their medication. The advocate discussed options such as locking bags for medication and referred the individual to social services for support in managing medication safely in warm weather.

System Issues

The primary systemic issues observed this quarter align with challenges from previous quarters, with housing shortages, lengthy wait times for services, and homelessness continuing to impact multiple

regions. Increased feedback from agencies undertaking community surveys is expected to provide additional insights by the next quarter.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no known conflicts of interest. All OBHA staff are Peer Washington employees. Neither OBHA employees nor our volunteers are employed by or have any financial or other type of direct association with a behavioral health provider or facility from which they could potentially derive any personal benefit.

Advocate Retention and Employment Status

New hires were made this quarter, filling two BHA roles and one AC position, with regional support provided as new staff are onboarded. Spokane’s AC, hired in August, is anticipated to have a positive impact on the region’s advocacy reach.

Outreach Activities: Visitations, Material Dissemination, and Community Forums & Education

OBHA maintained its regional monthly forums, including community-based town halls and open houses. Notable this quarter was the Southwest Region's town hall, where several agencies engaged with community members. Participation insights will enhance future event planning.

Table 3. Outreach & Education Activities

Regions	No. of Presentations*	No. of Conferences
State OBHA Office	5	2
Great Rivers Region	10	4
Greater Columbia Region	1	2
King County Region	12	
North Central Region	18	
North Sound Region	2	
Pierce County Region	1	
Salish Region	3	
Southwest Region	52	2
Spokane Region	6	
Thurston/Mason Region	12	1

** This number includes community forums held during the quarter.*

Trainings Delivered

OBHA conducted its quarterly training in September, which covered documentation best practices, team-building activities, and Trans 101. This training provided key professional development opportunities for OBHA staff.

Professional Development for OBHA Staff

In addition to the September training, OBHA invested in a range of development activities, focusing on documentation, communication, and inclusion practices essential to effective advocacy.

Funds Expended

No funds were passed through OBHA during this quarter.