



## SALISH BHO

### ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Policy Name:** OMBUDS SERVICES

**Policy Number:** 13.02

**Reference:** WAC 388-865-0262; State Contract

**Effective Date:** 2/2002

**Revision Date(s):** 2/2013; 7/2016; 6/2018

**Reviewed Date:** 7/2016; 6/2017; 6/2018

**Approved by:** SBHO Executive Board

#### CROSS REFERENCES

- Policy: Grievance, Appeal and Fair Hearing General Requirements
- Policy: Corrective Action Plan

#### PURPOSE

It is the policy of the Salish Behavioral Health Organization (SBHO) to establish a service responsive to the age and demographic character of the region, and to assist and advocate for individuals with concerns and grievances concerning services, through the establishment of an independent Ombuds Service.

#### PROCEDURE

1. The independence of the SBHO Ombuds service is assured by contracting for Ombuds Services from an independent contractor. The current contractor is the Kitsap Dispute Resolution Center. This contractor provides Ombuds Services throughout the SBHO region.
2. The Behavioral Health Services Ombuds position, will **not** be filled by any person who:
  - a. has been employed by the SBHO or a subcontracted provider in the preceding two years.
  - b. has a fiduciary tie to any service provider or financial decision making capacity in an organization that raises funds to be used as gifts for support of direct services.
  - c. has not satisfactorily passed a Washington State Patrol background check.
  - d. has not received state required training, as determined by the Department, within three months of assuming the Ombuds person position.

- e. is identified as a Federal Excluded or disbarred person.
3. The SBHO, by specifying in the contract for Ombuds services, encourages and assures the Ombuds will:
- a. Receive individual, family member, and other interested party concerns and assists in the individual's resolution with the individual's consent, at the lowest possible level.
  - b. Meet with individuals, families, advocacy groups and providers to make the Ombuds services known.
  - c. For the purposes of outreach and resolving concerns, have access to individuals, service sites, and records relating to the individual. The SBHO, network providers, and subcontractors will provide access to records, contingent upon written consent as described by law.
  - d. Be accessible to individuals, family members, including having a toll-free independent phone line.
  - d. Intercede and advocate on behalf of individuals and family members, at the individual's request, in the grievance process.
  - e. Publicize by brochure and other means, the availability of Ombuds service.
  - f. Coordinates and collaborates with allied services to improve effectiveness of advocacy and to reduce duplication when serving the same individual.
  - g. Outreach to ethnic minority communities, and elderly, and child advocates to promote services.
  - h. Investigate and assist in achieving fair resolutions for or on the behalf of individuals which includes making recommendations for additional or different solutions.
  - i. Use his/her best efforts to ensure the individual filing a concern or grievance is not retaliated against and to ensure anonymity.
  - j. Direct concerns through formal and informal channels, and, with the individual's consent, offer to assist the individual throughout the grievance, appeal, and Fair Hearing processes.
  - k. Consult with those involved in the grievance, gather and study information on the situation presented, and, whenever possible, resolve differences.
  - l. Recognize that the Ombuds person has no binding authority to make decisions on grievances.
  - m. Encourage volunteer assistance in the Ombuds office, particularly the assistance of individuals or advocates.
  - n. Maintain confidentiality.
  - o. Participate in SBHO Advisory and/or Governing Board meetings no less than quarterly.
  - p. Meet with Quality Review Team (QRT) formally and informally on a regular basis.
  - q. Submit trends reports quarterly for broad distribution to the following stakeholders: SBHO Grievance Manager, Quality Improvement Committee, and

Quality Review Team; and upon request to: Local Individual/Family Advocate Groups, Service area behavioral health Advisory Boards, Provider Network, and the state.

- r. Attend ongoing statewide Ombuds trainings, sponsored by the state.
  - s. Participate in SBHO QUIC quarterly meetings. Report on noticeable trends regionally, or within a provider agency, as appropriate.
  - t. Attend state sponsored certified Peer Counselor training, as applicable.
4. The Ombuds will supply the SBHO with a copy of the current program Policies and Procedures, upon request.
  5. The Ombuds program will supply the SBHO with a copy of quarterly program activity and bi-annual expenditure reports.

## **MONITORING**

This policy is a mandate by contract and statute.

1. This Policy will be monitored through use of SBHO:
  - Annual SBHO Subcontractor Administrative Review
  - Annual Provider Chart Reviews
  - Grievance Report and Tracking
  - Biennial Provider Quality Review Team On-site Review
  - Semi-annual Provider Revenue and Expense Report
  - Review of previous Corrective Action Plans
2. If a provider performs below expected standards during any of the reviews listed above a Corrective Action will be required for SBHO approval. Reference SBHO Corrective Action Plan Policy.