

Behavioral health care is stronger when we collaborate across our union



What does it mean to you to join a bigger conversation about the care we give? Some of the comments from our last meeting include ...

- ★ This joint effort provides a bigger picture. We have common challenges to fight for our patients' rights and our rights.
- ★ Coming together helps us find the missing pieces. Every agency does work for the patients who need mental health care, but our services are siloed. When we see how these pieces fit, we can move them to recovery more smoothly.
- ★ This is a great opportunity for us to get to know each other so we can find out how to support one another. It is great to know there's someone who will pick up the ball.
- ★ Funding affects all of us – it is a ubiquitous, continuous issue. We are always doing more with less.

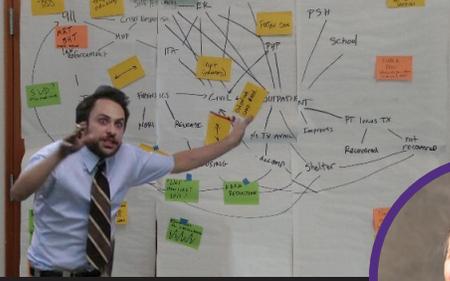
Critical thinking on housing

We know how hard it is for people who are unhoused to heal, and we know the stress of being unhoused can lead to the appearance or worsening of behavioral health issues. The answer is deceptively simple. **We do not have enough housing.**



“For our residents, it takes being housed at least as long as they were on the streets for them to feel comfortable and secure to work past the trauma, past what happened to them on the street. It is night and day to see our residents from when they first came in, to who they are now. Housing is the first step. Otherwise, how are you going to get them meds, and how will we help people who are worried about a roof over their head, work on anything else? Instead, they wonder, are they going to be in the rain tonight? Will their next meal be today or in a week? You can't expect them to do anything when they are just worried about living.” – **Natasha Bratrud, Catholic Community Services, Case Manager**

WHEN SOMEONE ASKS WHY THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM ISN'T WORKING



Meme courtesy of John Rios, DESC, Case Manager



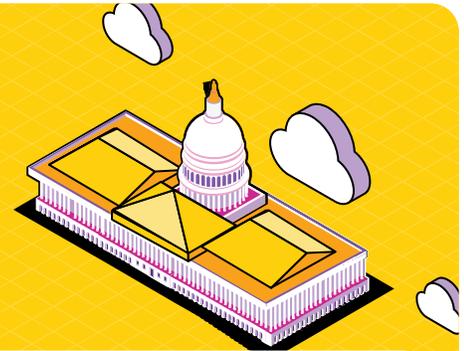
As we begin to map out how all of our behavioral health systems work together, we're learning there are things that can and can't be expressed through a map. We can see that the system is complicated and confusing. We can see how hard it would be for a patient or client to know what to do, who to call, or where to go.

But what are some things we can't see? One is that communication between each piece of the system is uneven at best, and often nonexistent. How much time do we spend newly diagnosing and treating people who already have a treatment plan and medications from another agency? Another is that time is a factor in every aspect of this system. When we can't transition from one kind of care to another quickly and seamlessly, opportunities are lost. When we can't move people through our system timely, sober people often begin using again, stable people often decompensate.

Behavioral Health Lobby Day!

As workers on the front lines of our state's mental health and housing crisis, we must make our voices heard! In early January, the WA State Legislative session convened – behavioral health and housing must be their priority so our communities have what they need to be healthy, safe, and thriving. Union members from agencies across the state will be joining us on **February 15** for SEIU 1199NW's Behavioral Health Lobby Day. We will go to Olympia and share our stories with lawmakers to support a safe workforce, a fully funded behavioral health system, and housing for everyone.

Speak with your organizer to RSVP.



"Those of us who work in Behavioral Health are a special community because we care so much about our patients and are coworkers! We all have so much more power when we come together! I'm going to Behavioral Health Lobby Day on February 15th so I can be part of the change and fight for what's right!"

- Naomi Morris, RN, DESC PACT Team, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Executive Board Member, Seattle Times "Puget Sounder who Brightens our Community"



"Legislators are already talking to the business leaders. We need to tell them what is really going on."

- Rebecca McClinton, Compass Health, Clinician



We're welcoming the workers at Comprehensive Life Resources, who just voted to join 1199NW! Our colleagues at Comprehensive now have a voice in their workplace and in caring for patients and clients.



"I believe that everything happens in community, and when we at Comprehensive voted overwhelmingly yes to unionize, it was a demonstration of just that. It showed the power of the collective action of our community and what we can accomplish moving forward together. Comprehensive does great work in our community, and our union can only strengthen what we already have. We are standing up and saying that we deserve better; we deserve equity, livable wages, better support, and racial justice in the workplace. Frontline workers have a unique position, because improving our working conditions doesn't only affect us, but also improves client care and, in return, our community as a whole." - Jaimie Flores, MCIRT Therapist, MCIRT