

**REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**

**Forensic Admissions and Evaluations – Performance Targets 2018  
Fourth Quarter (October 1, 2018-December 31, 2018)**

Substitute Senate Bill 6492, Section 2 (Chapter 256, Laws of 2012)  
As amended by Substitute Senate Bill 5889, Section 1 (Chapter 5, Laws of 2015)  
RCW 10.77.068(3)

March 14, 2019

Behavioral Health Administration  
Office of Forensic Mental Health Services  
PO Box 45050  
Olympia, WA 98504-5050  
(360) 725-3820  
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha>

## Contents

BACKGROUND.....	3
COMPETENCY EVALUATION AND RESTORATION DATA.....	4
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION .....	4
ACTIONS TAKEN .....	19
NEXT STEPS.....	21
SUMMARY .....	21

## **BACKGROUND**

On May 1, 2012, Substitute Senate Bill 6492 added a section to chapter 10.77 RCW that established performance targets for the “timeliness of the completion of accurate and reliable evaluations of competency to stand trial and admissions for inpatient restoration services related to competency to proceed or stand trial for adult criminal defendants.” These targets were codified under RCW 10.77.068 and phased in over six months to one year.

After full implementation of each performance target, the bill required the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to report to the executive and the legislature following any quarter in which it does not meet the performance target. This reporting must address (1) the extent of the deviation, and (2) any corrective action being taken to improve performance.

On July 24, 2015, Substitute Senate Bill 5889 amended RCW 10.77.068. The bill retained the performance targets for competency services but added to these a set of “maximum time limits” phased in over one year. After full implementation of the maximum time limits, SSB 5889 required DSHS to report to the executive and the legislature following any quarter in which it does not meet each performance target or maximum time limit.

As a result of these two bills, current performance targets and maximum time limits under RCW 10.77.068(1)(a) are as follows:

- (i) For a state hospital to extend an offer of admission to a defendant in pretrial custody for legally authorized evaluation services related to competency, or to extend an offer of admission for legally authorized services following dismissal of charges based on incompetence to proceed or stand trial:
  - (A) A performance target of seven days or less; and
  - (B) A maximum time limit of fourteen days;
- (ii) For a state hospital to extend an offer of admission to a defendant in pretrial custody for legally authorized inpatient restoration treatment related to competency:
  - (A) A performance target of seven days or less; and
  - (B) A maximum time limit of fourteen days;
- (iii) For completion of a competency evaluation in jail and distribution of the evaluation report for a defendant in pretrial custody:
  - (A) A performance target of seven days or less; and
  - (B) A maximum time limit of fourteen days, plus an additional seven-day extension if needed for clinical reasons to complete the evaluation at the determination of the department;
- (iv) For completion of a competency evaluation in the community and distribution of the evaluation report for a defendant who is released from custody and makes a reasonable effort to cooperate with the evaluation, a performance target of twenty-one days or less.

Section (1)(b) of RCW 10.77.068 establishes the beginning and end points for applying the performance targets and maximum time limits set forth above. Section (1)(c) identifies six conditions that shall serve as defenses to an allegation that the department has exceeded the maximum time limits.

As mandated by RCW 10.77.068(3), the following quarterly report explains the extent to which the hospitals deviated from performance targets in Quarter two of 2018 (April 1, 2018-June 30, 2018), and describes the plans to meet these performance targets.

## **COMPETENCY EVALUATION AND RESTORATION DATA**

RCW 10.77.068(1)(a)(i)(A) and (ii)(A), as amended by SSB 5889, establishes a performance target of seven days or less for the state hospitals to:

- 1) Extend an offer of admission to a defendant in pretrial custody for legally authorized treatment or evaluation services related to competency; or
- 2) Extend an offer of admission for legally authorized services following dismissal of charges based on incompetence to proceed or stand trial.

RCW 10.77.068(1)(a)(iii)(A), as amended by SSB 5889, sets a performance expectation that competency evaluations for a defendant who is in jail will be completed and distributed within seven days or less.

RCW 10.77.068(1)(a)(iv), as amended by SSB 5889, sets a performance expectation that competency evaluations for a defendant who is released from custody and makes a reasonable effort to cooperate with the evaluation will be completed and distributed within twenty-one days or less.

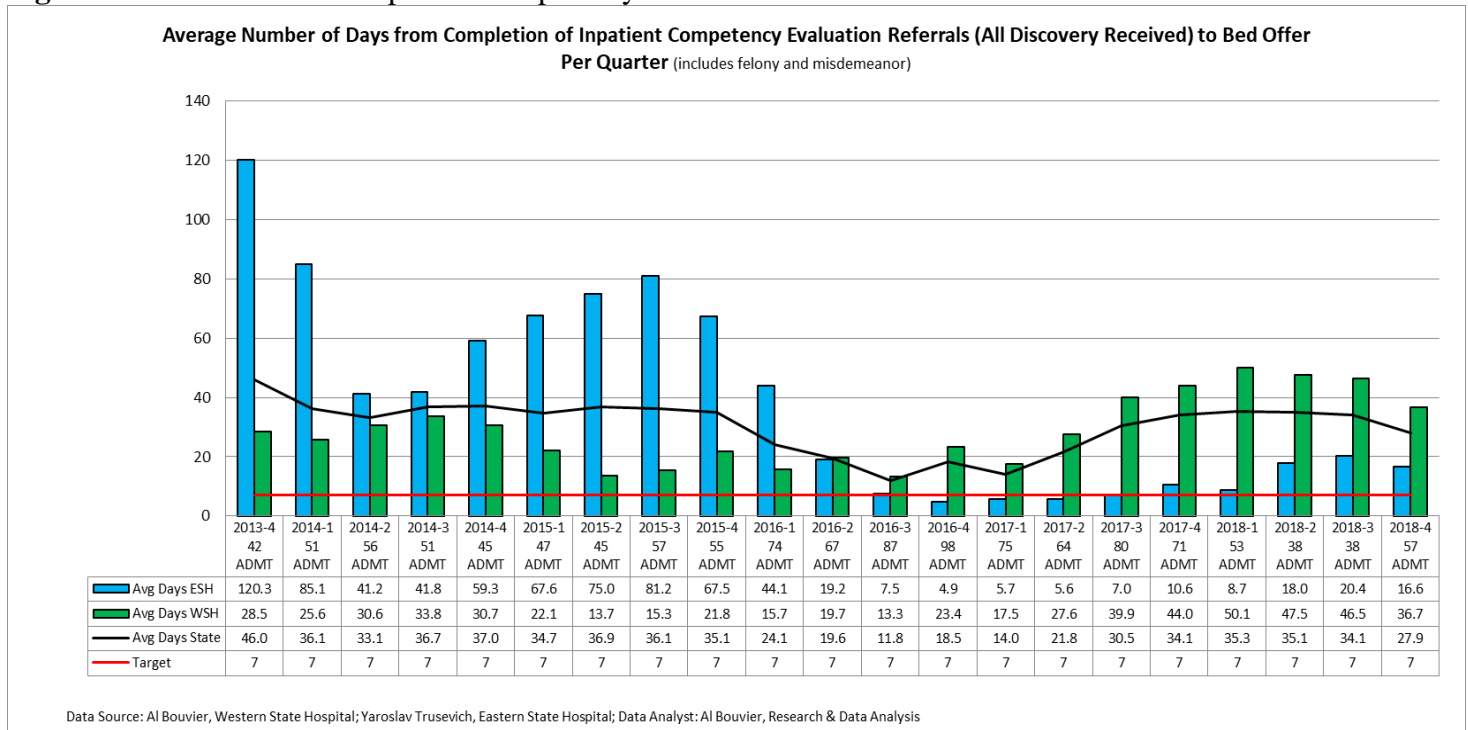
## **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the report is organized in the following manner: (1) Statewide Forensic System Data and (2) Actions Taken. Additional detailed data and information about timely competency services is available in monthly reports published by the Department of Social and Health Services in compliance with requirements established in the April 2015 *Trueblood* court order. These reports are available on the Office of Forensic Mental Health Services (OFMHS) website at:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/trueblood-et-al-v-washington-state-dshs>

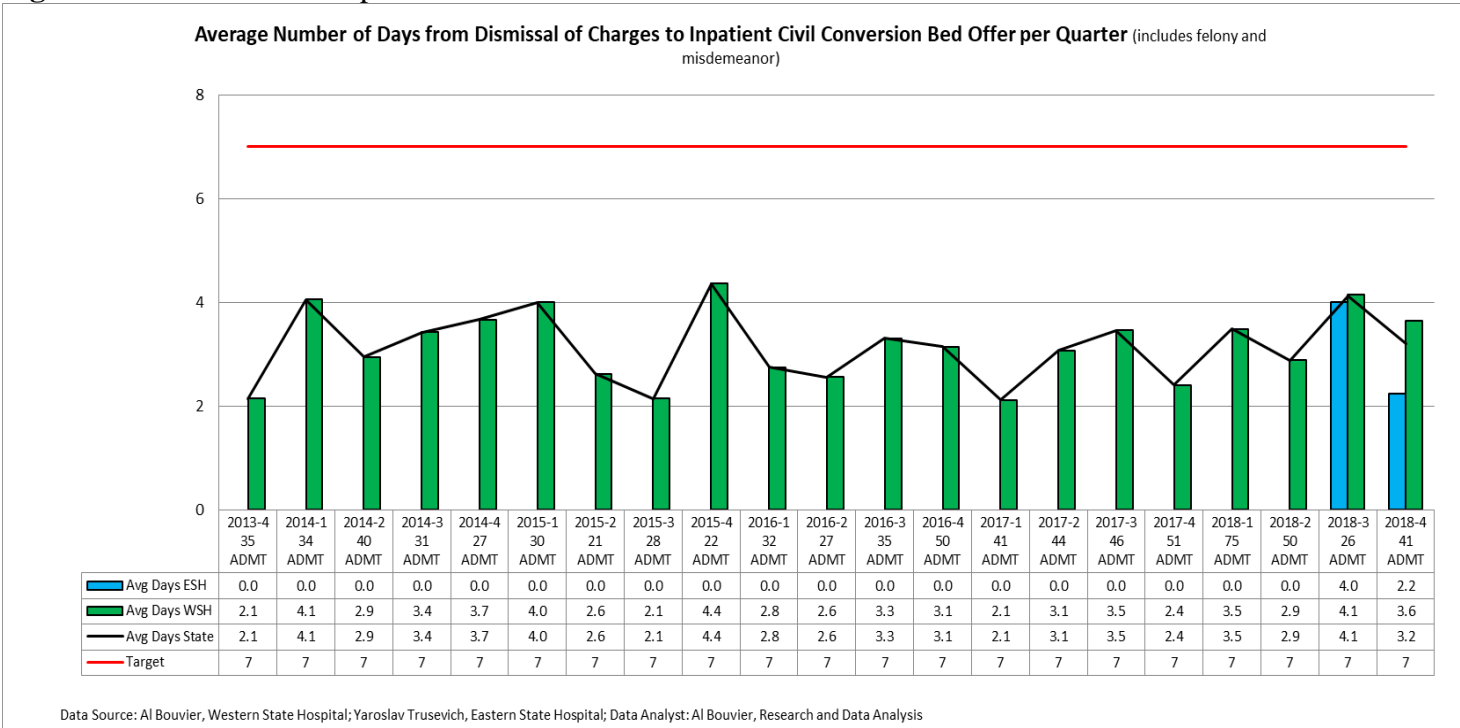
Please note that the data presented in this report differs slightly than in the *Trueblood* reports because the statute begins the count for timely service at the date of receipt of Discovery while the *Trueblood* order begins the count at the date the court order for services is signed, or the date the court order for services is received depending on the number of days between signature and receipt of the order.

**Figure 1:** shows results for inpatient competency evaluation cases



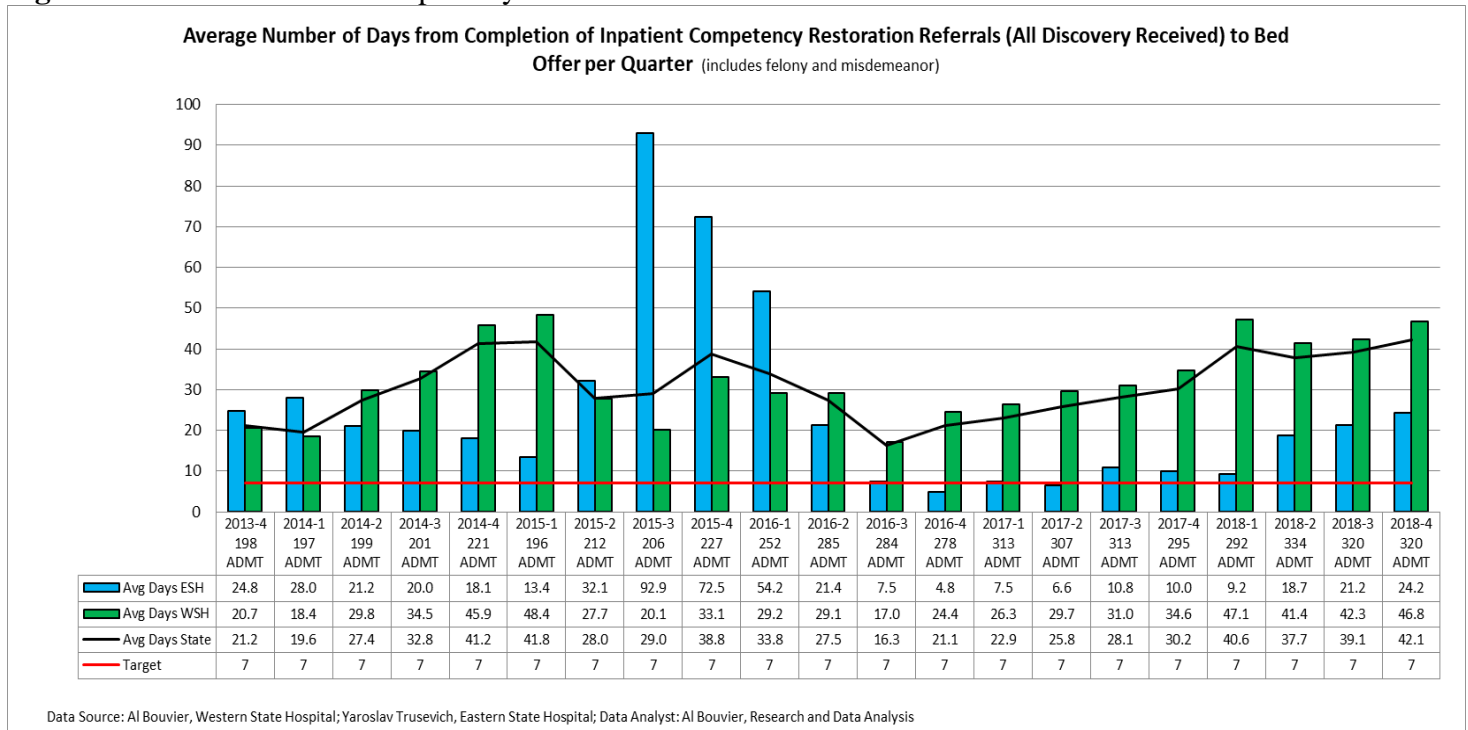
- **Figure 1.** These are the average wait times related to hospital admission for inpatient competency evaluations only (including PR's (defendants released on Personal Recognizance)).
- **Outcomes:** During the fourth quarter of 2018, the previous significant decrease in the number of admissions from previous quarters began to rise again. However, the average wait times at WSH, between referral for evaluation and bed offer, after increasing each quarter in 2017 and continuing to do so in Q1 2018, continue to drop. ESH wait times saw a decrease in Q4 2018, as compared to the two previous quarters.
- **Drivers:** During this quarter, WSH has seen its wait list consistently over 250 individuals on any given day. Despite this wait list, and orders extending restoration times (ie. 90-day orders extended to 180-day orders for additional restoration treatment) as well as an ongoing lack of sufficient capacity, both hospitals were able to decrease wait times; by nearly a week on the statewide average. This is due to the continued efforts of hospital staff to implement the waitlist algorithm and using a bed allocation approach to maximize bed turnover.

**Figure 2:** shows results for post-dismissal referrals



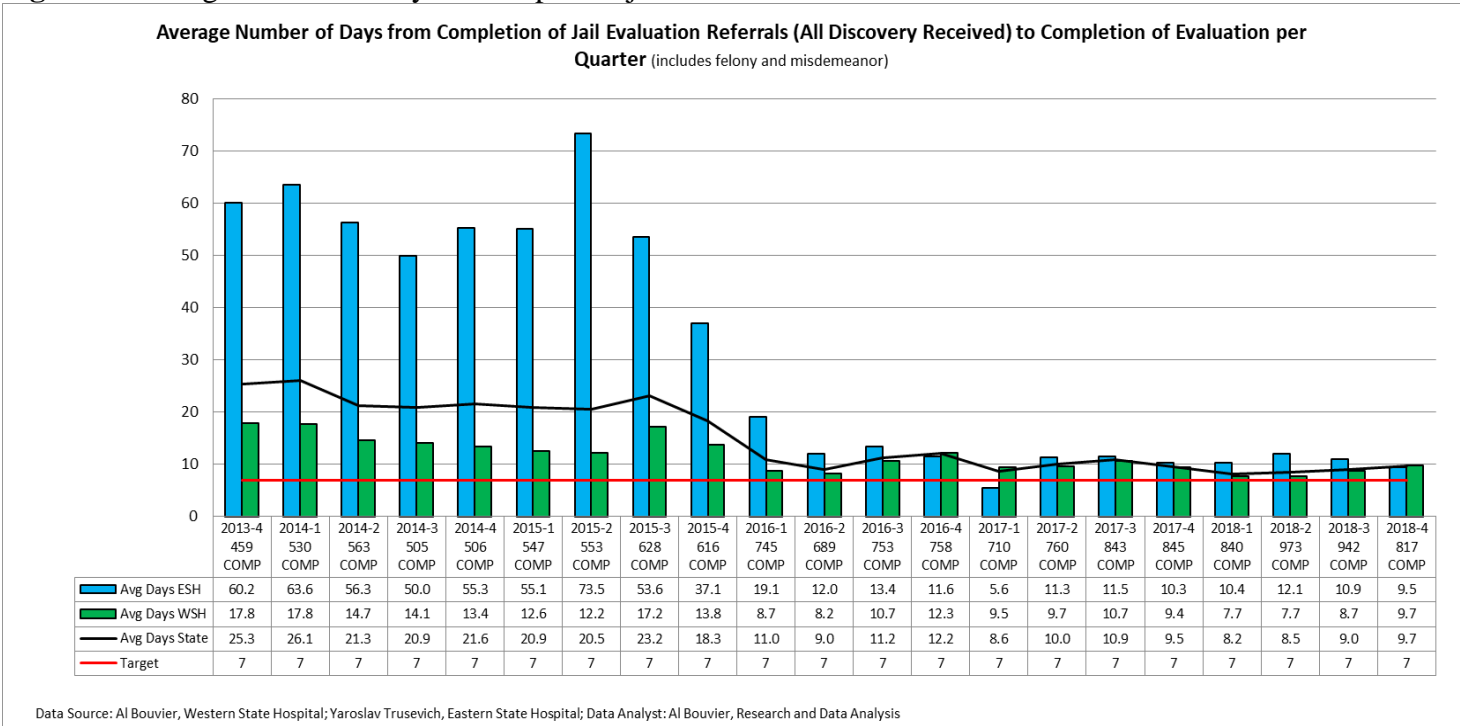
- **Figure 2.** This chart reflects average days from dismissal of charges to an offer of admission at each State hospital and a combined State average.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period both ESH and WSH continue to be well below the seven day target.
- **Drivers:** The continued positive performance at both hospitals is attributed to staff maintaining clear focus on prioritizing these beds for admissions. One caveat with this prioritization is that it comes with a cost in that *Trueblood* admissions are impacted negatively because of this prioritization.

**Figure 3:** shows results for competency restoration cases



- **Figure 3.** This chart reflects the average wait time for admission for competency restoration referrals only (including PRs).
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, WSH had a slight increase in wait times, while ESH had a more modest increase. Overall, the statewide average increased by three days.
- **Drivers:** As was the case in Q3 2018, the 320 admissions completed during this reporting period marks the second highest number of admissions since reporting began; second only to Q2 2018. Such a high volume represents progress in serving this population. However, such volumes impact wait times negatively, as was seen at both hospitals.

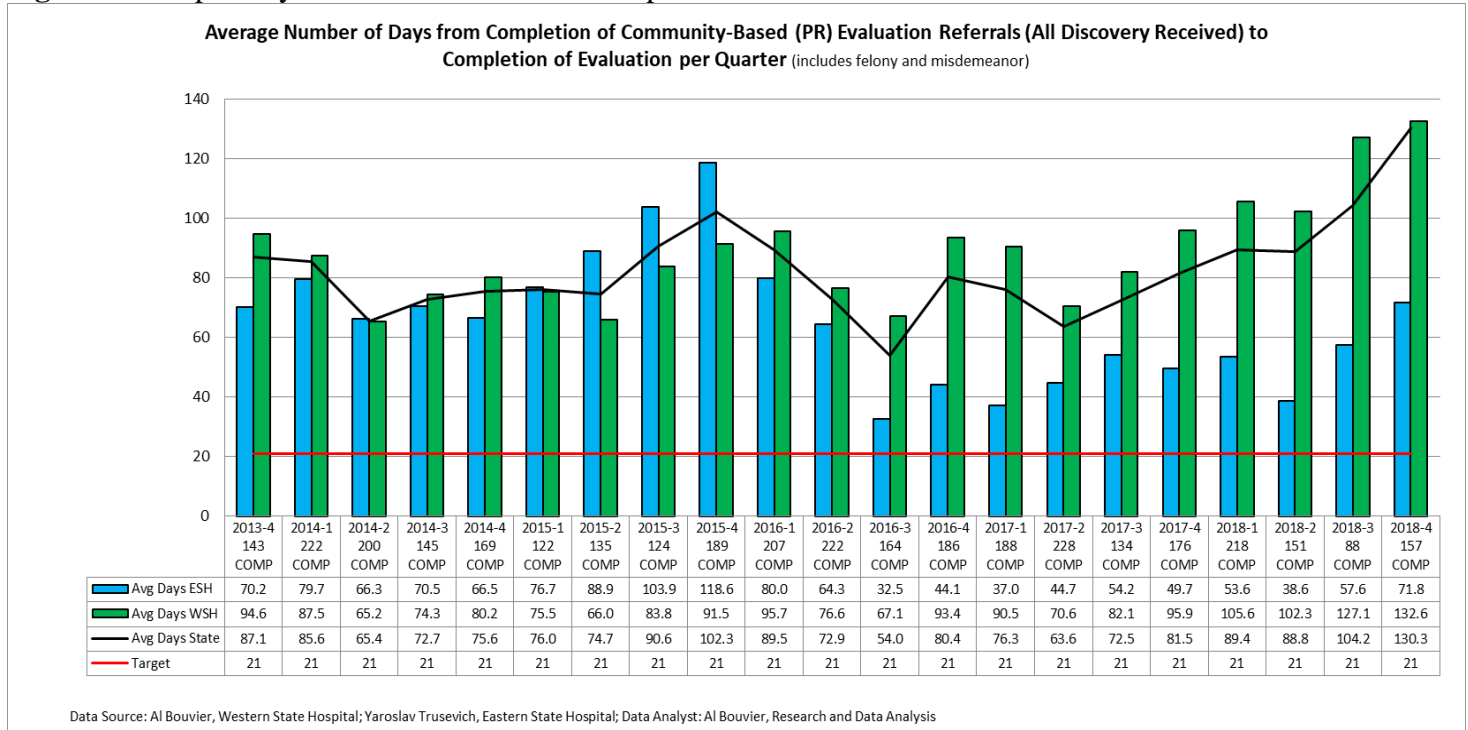
**Figure 4:** average number of days to complete a jail based evaluation



- Figure 4.** This chart provides information on the average number of days to complete a jail-based evaluation from the receipt of all discovery.
- Outcomes:** During the reporting period, WSH completion times increased slightly, while ESH experienced a slight decrease in average completion times. **It should be noted that the statewide average completion time has remained in single digit days for five straight quarters. This was accomplished in Q4 while continuing to see record or near-record numbers for referrals.**
- Drivers:** This time period for completions, since Q1 2016, represents significant improvement over performance prior to 2016. Additionally, the statewide average continued to decline over the second half of 2017 and into 2018. This improvement in performance reflects the work done by DSHS/OFMHS to increase the number of evaluators on staff (added 21 evaluators since 2015), utilizing RCW 10.77 to work with county panel evaluators, hiring two additional supervisors in the Fall of 2017, and working with jails (providing greater access, and assisting in scheduling) to further bolster efforts. Continued utilization of improvements in technology (laptops, digital dictation, and cellular phones) has also helped.



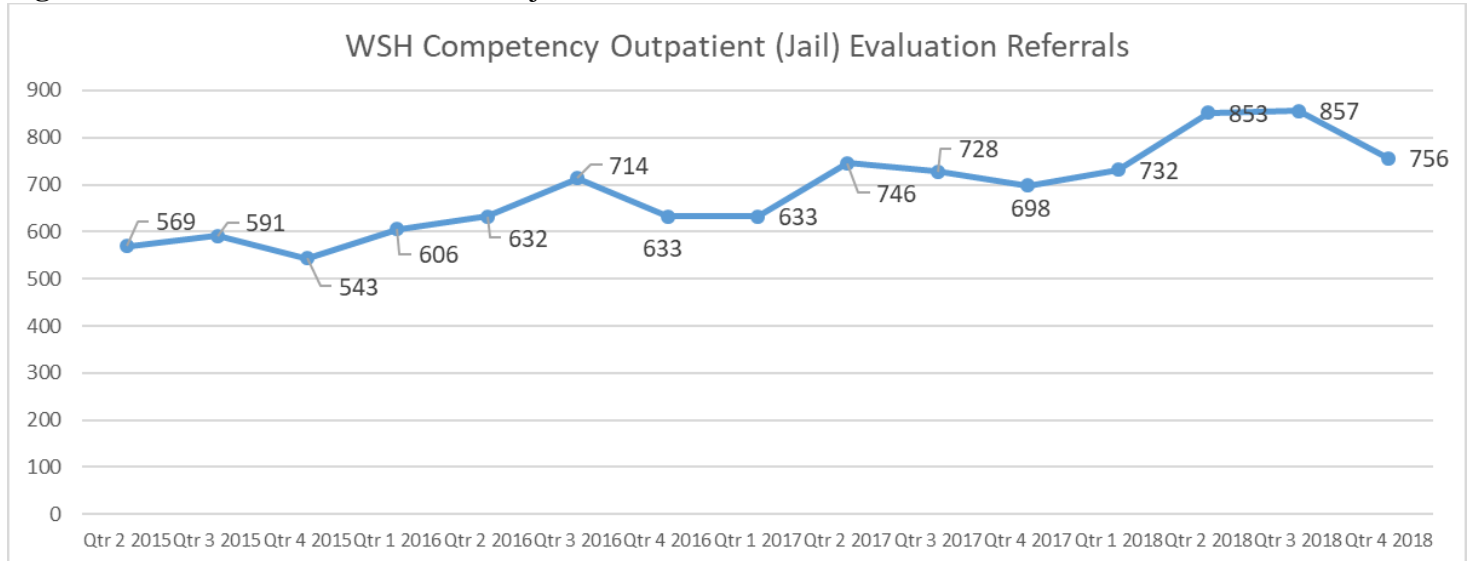
**Figure 5:** competency evaluation time frame completion for PR cases



- **Figure 5.** This chart provides information on the average number of days to complete PR evaluations from the receipt of all discovery.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, both WSH and ESH saw increases in average completion times from the previous quarter.
- **Drivers:** The variability in completion times is attributed to resources having been directed to cases involving *Trueblood* class members as the number one completion priority based on established constitutional rights from the *Trueblood* court order. As such, resource allocation demands that DSHS/OFMHS focus its efforts in such a way as to mitigate, as much as possible, the impacts of these constitutional violations and related fines for jail-based evaluations. This has resulted in greater fluctuation with regard to performance measures in this category.

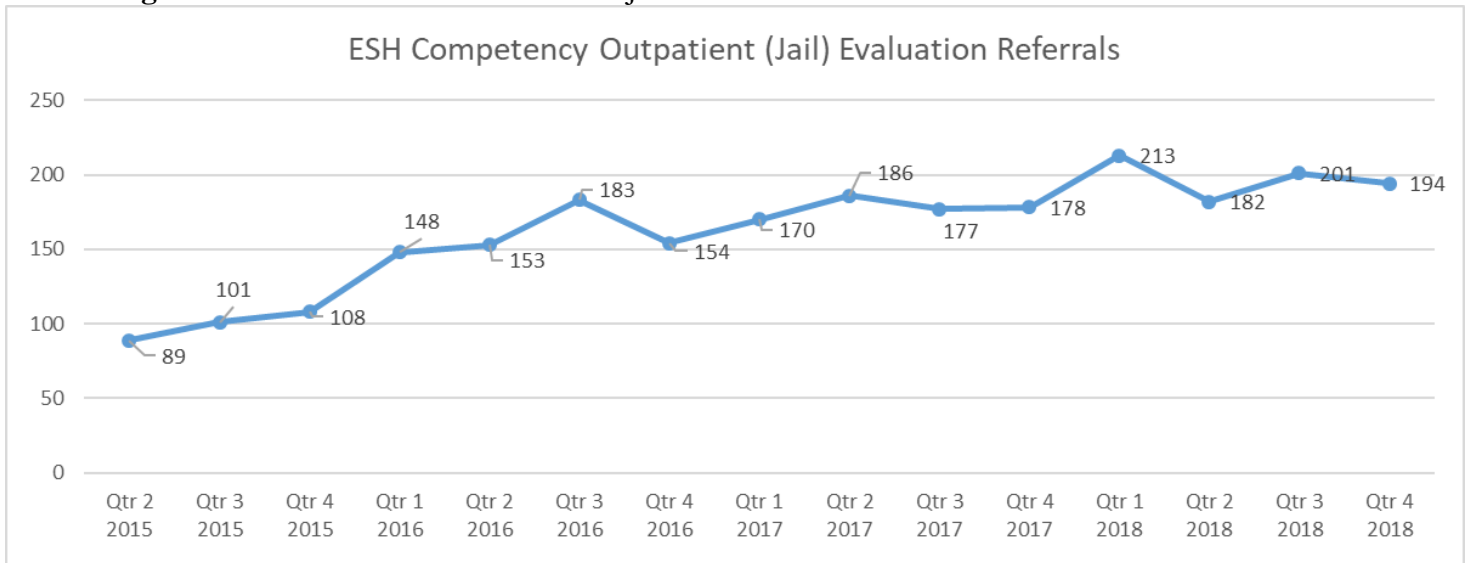
**Figures 6-14:** show *global referral data* to illustrate total orders signed by calendar quarter for jail-based evaluations, inpatient evaluations, and restoration services for WSH, ESH, and both hospitals combined.

**Figure 6:** shows total WSH referrals for jail-based evaluations



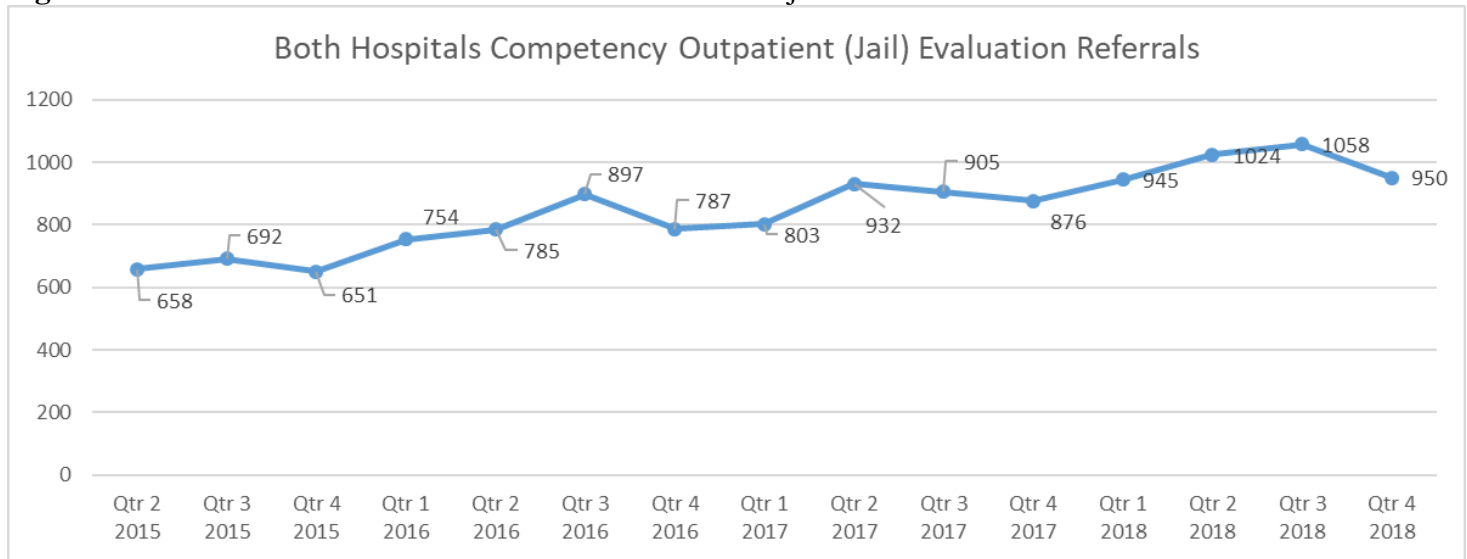
- **Figure 6.** This chart illustrates WSH total quarterly referrals for jail-based evaluations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, WSH hospital saw a decrease in referrals from the previous quarter. However, this number represents the continued high demand in 2018, relative to prior years (annual averages: 2016 = 646.25; 2017 = 701.25; 2018 = 799.5).
- **Drivers:** Referrals for competency evaluation have increased significantly over the period illustrated above. This strongly suggests a “build it and they will come” effect; improved efficiency in providing consumers with a highly valued forensic service has itself increased the demand for that service. This is a well-known effect also seen in other supply and demand phenomena, such as the energy industry.

**Figure 7:** shows total ESH referrals for jail-based evaluations



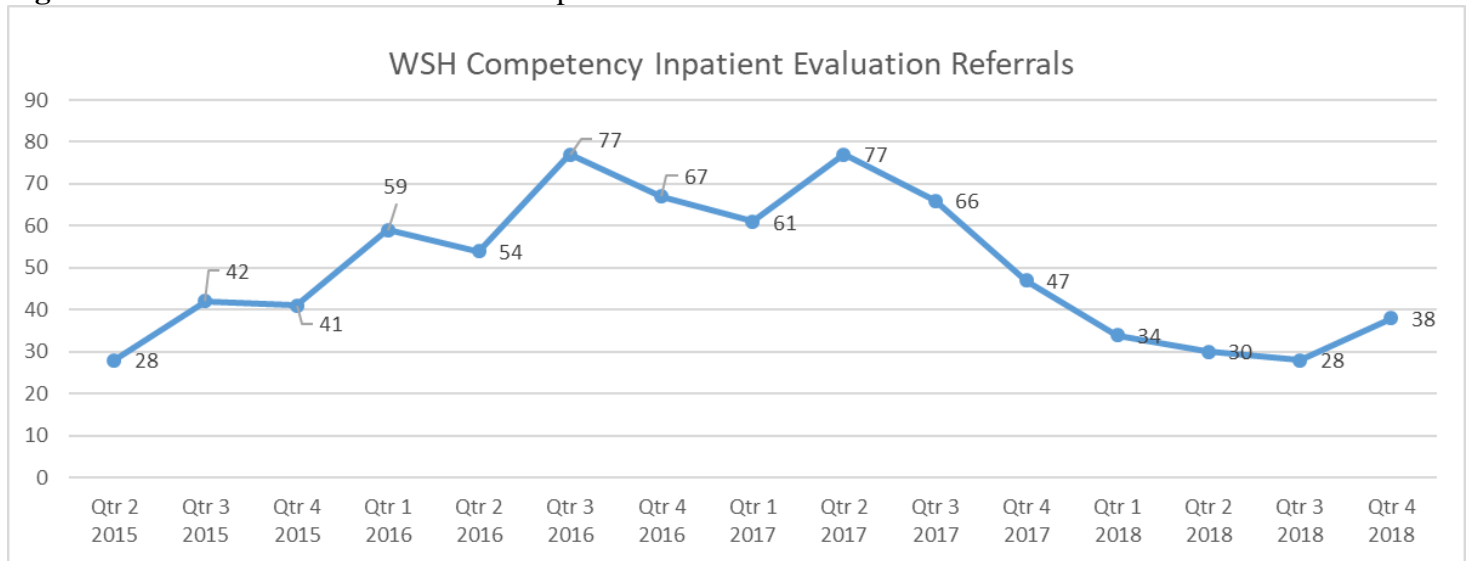
- **Figure 7.** This chart illustrates ESH total quarterly referrals for jail-based evaluations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, ESH saw a slight decrease in referrals, but still more than twice the number seen when reporting began.
- **Drivers:** The overall trend of increasing referral totals is driven by demand. As the Department has increased capacity and gained efficiencies in its processes, the criminal court system and mental health community have demanded the Department’s services at a pace that has outstripped gains made in capacity and efficiencies.

**Figure 8:** shows total WSH and ESH combined referrals for jail-based evaluations



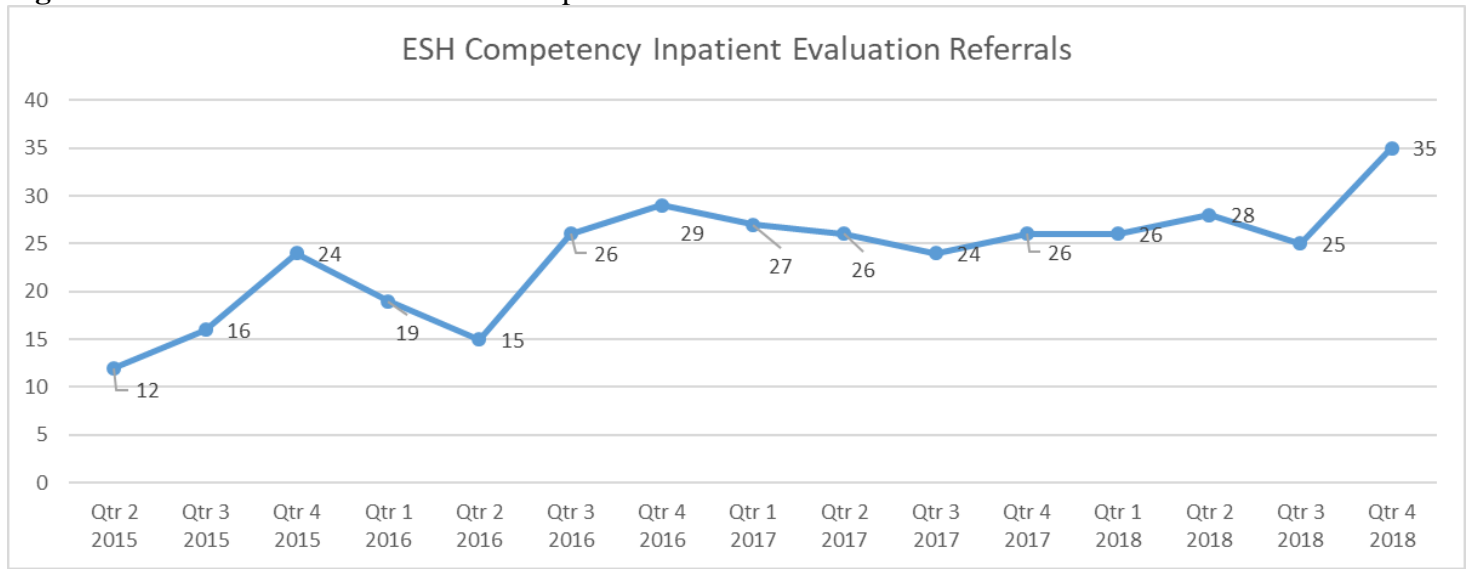
- **Figure 8.** This chart illustrates the combined total quarterly referrals for jail-based evaluations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, there was a decrease in total referrals for both hospitals combined as compared with the previous quarter. However, this number is still significantly higher than when reporting began (a 44.38% increase from Q2 2015).
- **Drivers:** The combined number of jail-based referrals to the hospitals, again, strongly suggests a “build it and they will come” effect; improved efficiency in providing consumers with a highly valued forensic service has itself increased the demand for that service.

**Figure 9:** shows total WSH referrals for inpatient evaluations



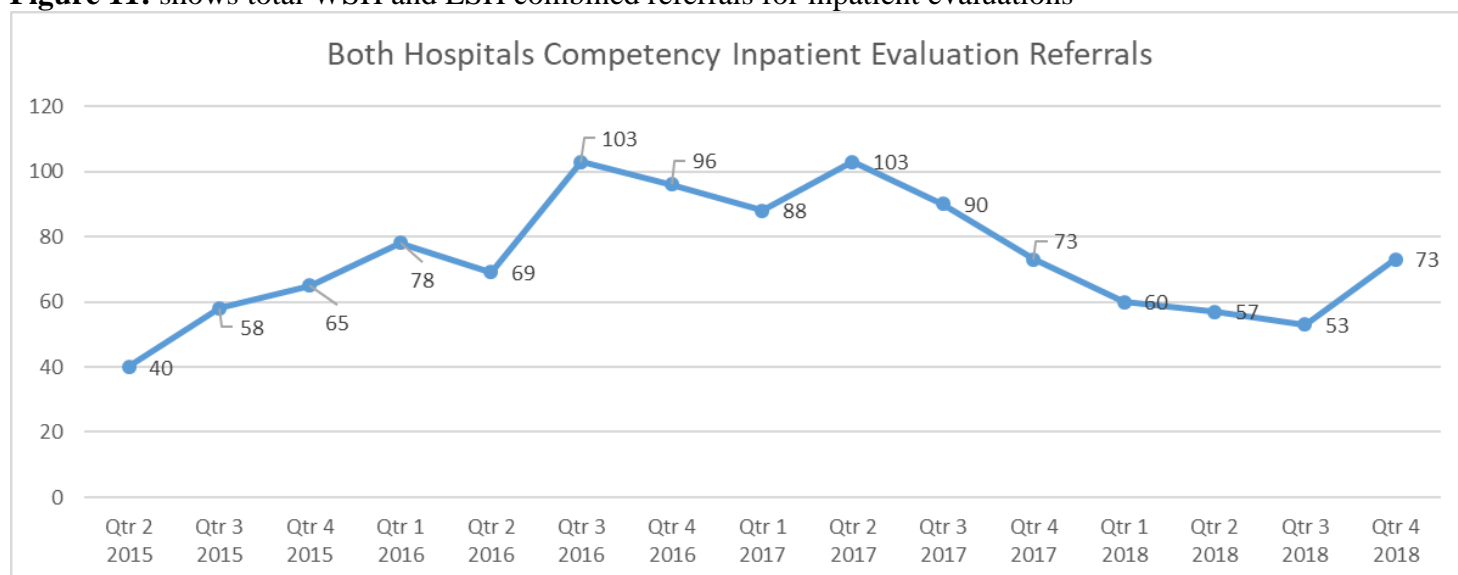
- **Figure 9.** This chart illustrates WSH total quarterly referrals for inpatient evaluations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, WSH saw a return to increasing referrals from the previous quarters.
- **Drivers:** The large decline in inpatient referrals seen over the previous six quarters may have been a rebound effect wherein courts had become aware of the fact that, previously, demand had outstripped capacity which resulted in long wait times and completion times. Anecdotal information suggests that courts and defense attorneys are beginning to view the wait times for admission to the hospital for an inpatient evaluation to be so prohibitively long that it is not worth pursuing as an order. Some courts issued new orders that take the defendant off the inpatient wait list, directing DSHS to conduct the evaluation in the jail. In other cases, the defendant has waited for such an extended period for admission that defense counsel motions the court for dismissal of charges. Q4 2018 may represent a reversal of this trend, however, one quarter is not enough to substantiate this.

**Figure 10:** shows total ESH referrals for inpatient evaluations



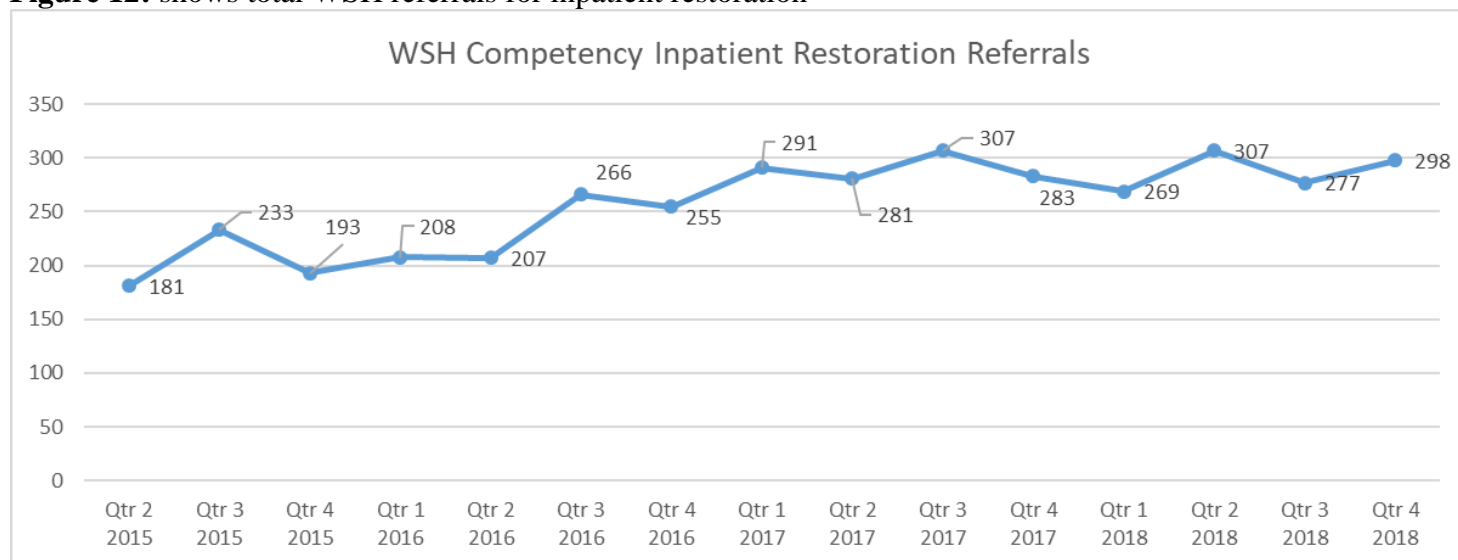
- **Figure 10.** This chart illustrates ESH total quarterly referrals for inpatient evaluations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, ESH saw a significant increase in referrals from the previous quarter **and is the highest number seen at ESH since reporting began.**
- **Drivers:** The overall trend of near-static inpatient evaluation orders illustrates that referrals for inpatient evaluations had remained relatively flat for the previous two years, at ESH. That would indicate a preference by the courts, as it pertains to patient evaluations, to have the vast majority of evaluations completed in jail as opposed to inpatient. The significant increase in Q4 2018 may indicate a reversal of this preference. However, again, one quarter of data is not enough to substantiate such a claim.

**Figure 11:** shows total WSH and ESH combined referrals for inpatient evaluations



- **Figure 11.** This chart illustrates the combined total quarterly referrals for inpatient evaluations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, there was a significant increase in total referrals for both hospitals combined as compared with the previous quarter; reversing the downward trend seen over the previous five quarters.
- **Drivers:** As contemplated in Figures 9 and 10, it appears as though an apparent preference by the courts and defense counsel, as it pertained to patient evaluations, to have the vast majority of evaluations completed in jail as opposed to inpatient, may have changed in Q4 2018.

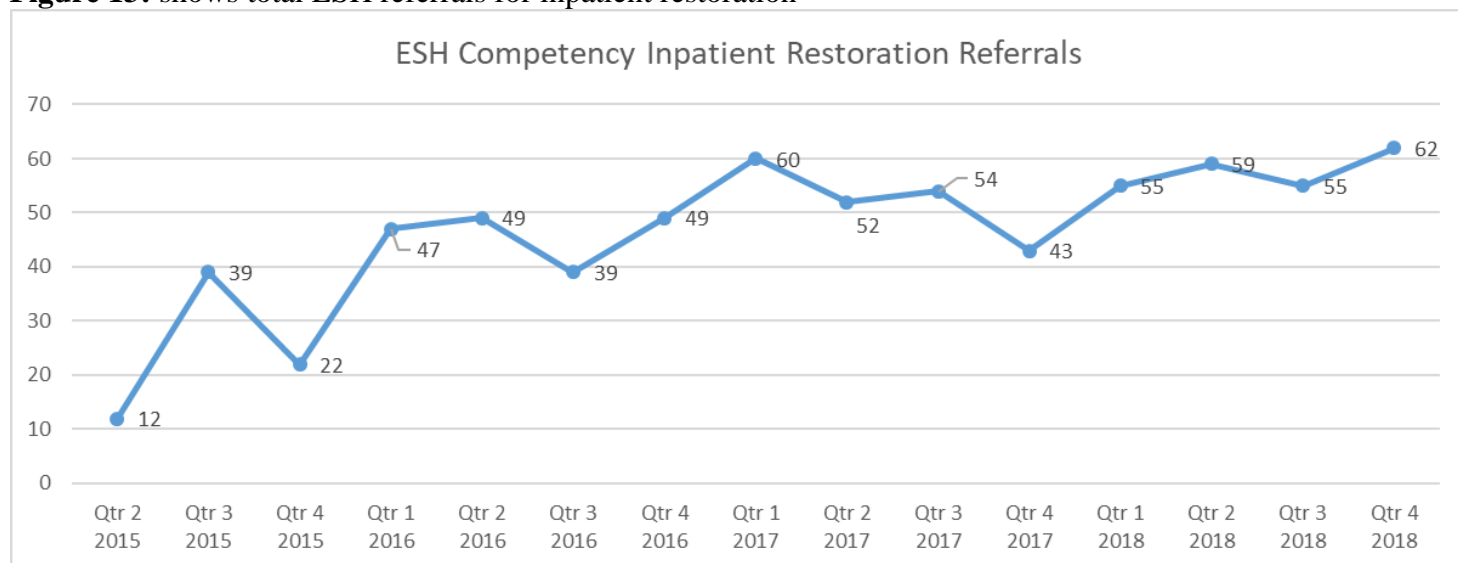
**Figure 12:** shows total WSH referrals for inpatient restoration



- **Figure 12.** This chart illustrates WSH total quarterly referrals for inpatient restorations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, WSH hospital saw an increase in referrals from the previous quarter, trending back toward record referrals.
- **Drivers:** Having seen a sharp increase in referrals since the *Trueblood* decision, the relatively flat number of referrals over the past ten quarters suggests that supply (bed capacity) is having a leveling effect on demand (referrals).

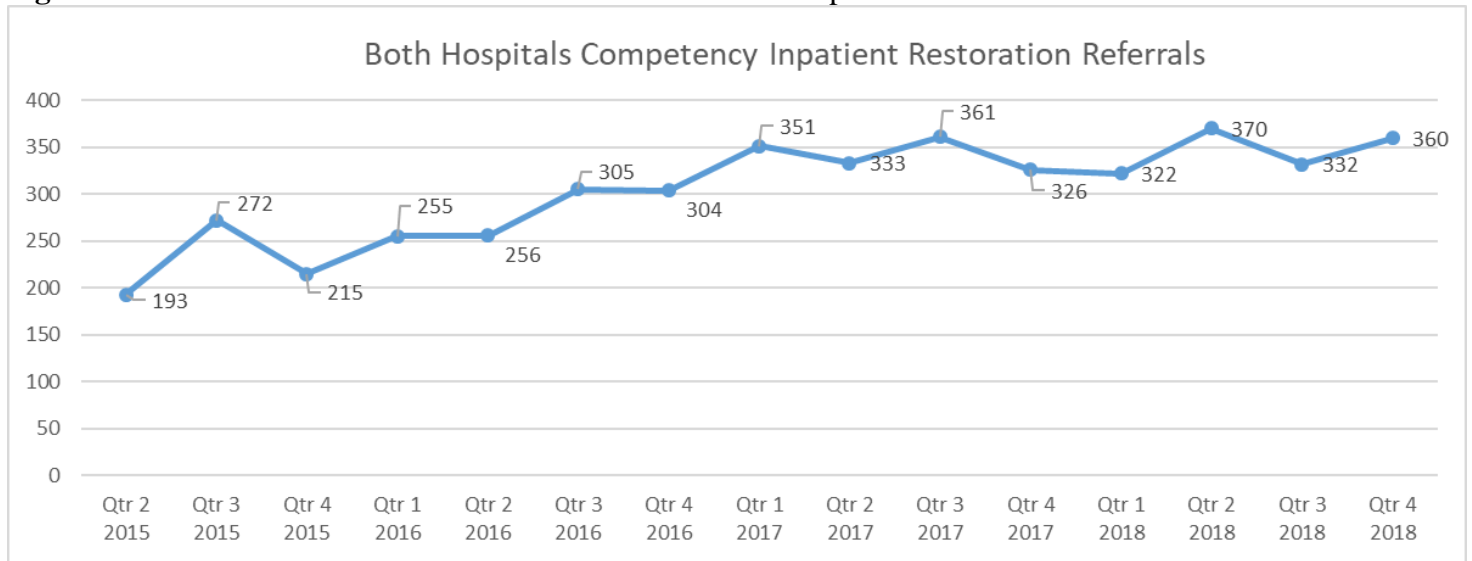


**Figure 13:** shows total ESH referrals for inpatient restoration



- **Figure 13.** This chart illustrates ESH total quarterly referrals for inpatient restorations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, ESH again saw an increase in referrals from the previous quarter, **and marked the highest number of referrals since reporting began.**
- **Drivers:** The quarterly increase in evaluation referrals (see Figures 7 & 10) appears to be the driver resulting in an increase number of restoration referrals. Of the 226 total evaluation referrals in Q3 2018, 55 lead to restoration referrals (24.3%). Q4 2018 saw 229 total evaluation referrals, leading to 62 restoration referrals (27.1%); a proportional result.

**Figure 14:** shows total WSH and ESH combined referrals for inpatient restorations



- **Figure 14.** This chart illustrates the combined total quarterly referrals for inpatient restorations.
- **Outcomes:** During the reporting period, the two hospitals saw an increase in restoration referrals from the previous quarter. The 2018 quarterly average is 346. The 2017 quarterly data (342.75 quarterly average), and the 2016 quarterly data (280 quarterly average) illustrate that, while relatively flat over the past two years, year-over-year numbers continue to climb, and are significantly higher than was seen in 2016.
- **Drivers:** The overall trend of relatively flat restoration referral numbers seems to echo what has been seen throughout this report; that supply (bed capacity) has had a leveling effect on demand (referrals).

## **ACTIONS TAKEN**

DSHS submitted a Long-Term Plan to the Court in July, 2015 which outlines DSHS' plans for coming into compliance with the timelines established in the *Trueblood* decision. On February 8, 2016, the Court issued an order modifying the original April 2, 2015 order, providing a new timeline requiring full compliance as of May 27, 2016. Pursuant to the Court's February 8, 2016 order, DSHS revised the Long-Term Plan and submitted this plan to the Court on May 6, 2016. The Long-Term Plan can be found here:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/BHSIA/FMHS/Trueblood/2016Trueblood/Combined-Long-Term-Plan-2016-05-06.pdf>

The Office of Forensic Mental Health Services (OFMHS) is responsible for the leadership and management of Washington's forensic mental health care system, and is addressing the increase in demand for mental health services for adults and youth in the criminal justice system. The OFMHS provides forensic evaluations, competency restoration, Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) treatment services, and liaison services to effectively coordinate efforts with system partners to meet shared goals. The OFMHS additionally provides ongoing training and technical assistance to improve quality and timeliness of: forensic mental health services; data management and resource allocation; training and certification of evaluators; quality monitoring and reporting. The OFMHS works in collaboration with the Governor's office to lead and implement robust diversion efforts to prevent citizens with mental illness from entering the criminal justice system. Significant public resources have been invested in providing the high quality and empirically supported services of OFMHS. Two major goals for OFMHS during this period were to (1) best-utilize current bed capacity, (2) gain efficiencies in the process of evaluation delivery, and (3) prosecutorial diversion programs and implementation of five RFP's using *Trueblood* fines.

Below are the key actions that occurred during this period to decrease wait times.

### **1. Best-Utilize Current Bed Capacity**

During this period, a focus on keeping beds full at all facilities (ESH, WSH, Maple Lane, and Yakima) was a continued key strategy.

A needs projection and bed capacity study was completed during this quarter with TriWest Group, a consultancy organization, to determine the feasibility of and timeframe for compliance with court orders. The impact of community based competency evaluation on the demand for inpatient competency evaluation and restoration beds were measured by TriWest Group. Results of this study were unable to identify any correlation (e.g. homelessness, arrest rates, etc.) to the increases in referrals.

The Community Liaison and Diversion Specialist has renewed OFMHS efforts in reducing demand for beds by working with community stakeholders to find and utilize available resources outside the criminal court system that will meet the needs of this population while fulfilling OFMHS requirements under *Trueblood*.

Triage services have continued in an effort to identify individuals for whom expedited admissions may be appropriate. To date this program, called TCEA (Triage Consultation and Expedited Admissions), has identified and accepted requests for 180 individuals for expedited admissions, out of a total of 286 individual referrals.

Work will need to be undertaken to continue increasing capacity and reducing demand. Actions are anticipated to take place in the next reporting period to address these challenges, and will be included in the next report.

## **2. Gain Efficiencies in Process of Evaluation Delivery**

During the period 2015 – 2017, 21 evaluators were added to current staff levels. Additionally, relationships with community evaluation services providers were established, allowing for panel evaluations to be done by counties and individual service providers to perform evaluations and bill DSHS/OFMHS directly. These relationships have improved evaluation completion times in many instances, despite the ever-increasing demand.

Additional efforts have also been made in the area of workforce development. Specifically, staff evaluators were offered training, with national experts in the field of competency evaluations, as a part of ongoing efforts to create and maintain the most highly trained and efficient staffing possible. Furthermore, use of tele-video services for evaluations continue, with more than 35 of these evaluations having been conducted to date.

## **3. Fund Prosecutorial Diversion Programs & RFP's Using *Trueblood* Fines**

During this reporting period, three State prosecutorial diversion pilot programs were funded. These programs allow a prosecutor to use their discretion to dismiss a non-serious charge without prejudice if the issue of competency is raised. The intent of these programs is to divert misdemeanor and low-level felony defendants from incarceration and hospitalization, into needed behavioral health treatment.

Additionally, 13 *Trueblood*-Fine funded programs were awarded funding that began July 1, 2017 include: King County (BHO); Sunrise Services, Inc.; Comprehensive Health Care; Great Rivers (BHO); Kitsap Mental Health Services. Three more programs were awarded funding that began operations in March, 2018 (Catholic Charities, Pierce County, and Thurston-Mason Behavioral Health Organization. These are in addition to state-funded diversion pilot programs; these include: Pacific County (program focused on misdemeanors, began September, 2016); Spokane County (program focused on those with misdemeanor and low-level felonies, began October, 2016); Greater Columbia (program focused on misdemeanors, began November, 2016); and King County (program focused on misdemeanors and low-level felonies, began January, 2017).

## **NEXT STEPS**

Future reports will provide continued progress reporting, with a focus on efforts made in four main areas as it relates to compliance: (1) expanding and best-utilizing bed capacity, (2) increasing throughput for inpatient services, (3) managing in-custody evaluations to reduce barriers so compliance can be reached, and (4) decreasing demand for competency services.

A key area for OFMHS work is to identify and develop, with community stakeholders, programs to reduce the demand of competency services in addition to working with these entities to identify and address the root causes for the continued increases in competency evaluation and restoration referrals.

Additionally, OFMHS has taken steps to create specific standards and expectations for staff evaluators, in adherence with our principals of being the most well-trained and efficient staff possible.

Lastly, an agreed proposal from Plaintiffs and Defendants was submitted to the court in January, 2018, and approved by the court in August, 2018, to consider a plan in which a collaborative approach between parties to provide concrete steps to address the forensic mental health system are outlined and submitted to the Governor's office. OFMHS continues to work with the court and Plaintiffs in a concerted effort to bring components of the proposal to fruition so as to better-serve *Trueblood* class members and all individuals placed in the custody of DSHS for forensic services.

## **SUMMARY**

The Department and OFMHS continue to work on what impacts can be made on these four levers: 1) increase, and best-utilize, bed capacity, 2) increase throughput for inpatient services (quicker turnover in hospitals), 3) manage in-custody evaluations to reduce barriers so compliance can be reached, and 4) decrease demand for competency services.

Ensuring that every bed is best-utilized to meet requirements under *Trueblood*, by maintaining efficient referral and admission practices, is a major key to DSHS/OFMHS work toward achieving compliance.

Continued triage and diversion efforts will also facilitate and improve these efforts by managing the inpatient portion of *Trueblood* class members, while also finding acceptable alternatives for those class members deemed suitable for these alternative options.

With the settlement agreement in place, OFMHS will continue to work with its partners (Health Care Authority, Criminal Justice Training Commission, and others) to implement and administer new programs that, it is hoped, will finally turn the tide and solve the problems that gave rise to the *Trueblood* case to begin with.