

THURSTON COUNTY TREATMENT SALES TAX - OVERVIEW

In November, 2008, the Board of County Commissioners adopted County Ordinance 14138 which implements a 1/10 of 1% sales tax, as allowed by Washington State RCW 82.14.460, in order to provide funding for the delivery of new or expanded mental health and chemical dependency services and new or expanded therapeutic courts. The ordinance was effective as of January 1, 2009 and expires on January 1, 2017. Funds from the tax were available for use as of July 1, 2009. The tax, known as the “Thurston County Treatment Sales Tax,” generates about \$4 million annually.

The goal of the “Treatment Sales Tax” is to: *“Improve the quality of life for Thurston County residents with mental illness and/or chemical dependency by reducing their involvement with the criminal justice system.”*

Major strategies used to achieving this goal have been:

- Address substance abuse and mental illness issues while adults and youth are incarcerated – and often more motivated to address these issues – and then facilitate continued treatment and support services upon release from jail or detention. Provide community-based treatment services to adults diagnosed with both mental illness AND substance abuse who are high users of public services and often, frequent users of jail beds.
- Divert adults from jail using Therapeutic Courts to address the underlying contributing factors to non-violent criminal behaviors while holding individuals responsible for their actions. This includes therapeutic courts that address adults at risk of permanently losing their children due to parental neglect/abuse as a result of substance abuse and/or mental illness.
- Provide mid-stage intervention for high risk youth, who have a history of multi-system involvement, and their families using evidence-based strategies. In addition, using the evidence-based strategy of Nurse-Family Partnership, provide very early stage intervention services to first time teen parents who are at high risk of child abuse/neglect and of perpetuating generational cycles of substance abuse and mental illness.

In 2011, the Treatment Sales Tax budget is \$4,184,726. Short term impacts of TST-funded services are expected to be:

- Reduced justice involvement for mentally ill and/or chemically dependent adults and youth through use of evidence-based therapeutic courts and treatment;
- Increased therapeutic services for adults who have co-occurring disorders of mental illness and chemical dependency;
- Increased levels of interagency collaboration, cross system coordination and planning between corrections, courts, mental health, chemical dependency and social services to improve efficiency and client outcomes;
- Reduced use of tax dollars for court, jail and emergency room care costs;
- Retained or increased levels of other federal and/or private funding for services.

Services provided between July 1-September 30, 2010:

- 1,272 adults and youth were provided services as a result of TST funding.
- 166 adults and youth participated in a county therapeutic court.
- 647 non-Medicaid eligible adults and youth received chemical dependency and/or mental health treatment.