

Bringing More Local Acute Care Beds Online

As one part of the solution to this ongoing short- and long-term inpatient treatment access crisis, King County and the CABTF are actively partnering with several providers to increase the number of certified evaluation and treatment (E&T) beds in King County. In March 2016, 10 beds for individuals with co-occurring medical concerns at MultiCare in Auburn were the first to become available – with an additional 10 likely to open at that same facility this summer, as it ramps up to its full capacity of 20 beds. There will also be a net increase in summer 2016 of 12 medically complex beds at Swedish Ballard as an older Swedish unit is closed and a new 22-bed facility opens. Finally, existing facility Cascade Behavioral Hospital in Tukwila was recently certified for 14 additional beds and will be working to bring them online as soon as feasible. Although they will be certified E&T beds, none of these three new resources will be solely for involuntary patients, as some will be used by voluntary or out-of-county patients.

Two freestanding (non-hospital) E&Ts in south King County, initiated by King County in partnership with the state and community providers, are in development and could become available between late 2016 and spring 2017. These facilities will be operated by Valley Cities Behavioral Health Care as well as the Telecare Corporation, and will admit exclusively involuntary patients. Both the Valley Cities and Telecare facilities are currently planned for 16 beds, with the Valley Cities site to be paired with a secure detoxification facility serving patients detained under newly passed Engrossed Third Substitute House Bill (E3SHB) 1713.⁸⁹

All King County E&T projects known to be expanding or in development as of spring 2016 are shown in the table below.⁹⁰

Estimated Number of New E&T Beds	Provider Agency	Planned Location	Specialty Care, if any	Estimated Time Frame for Bed Availability
20 ⁹¹	MultiCare	Auburn	Medically complex	Spring / Summer 2016
12 (net) ⁹²	Swedish	Ballard (Seattle)	Medically complex	Summer 2016
16	Valley Cities	Kent ⁹³	None	Late 2016 to Early 2017
16	Telecare	Federal Way	None	Spring 2017
14	Cascade	Tukwila	None	2016 or 2017 ⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Please see page 48 as well as priority 1h on page 88 for further discussion of this law.

⁹⁰ Bed counts and timeframes in this chart, and in the discussion above, were current as of April 2016. In addition to the King County projects shown in the table, Fairfax's Monroe facility recently added an estimated 30 beds to serve older adults, while MultiCare's Tacoma facility is working to bring on 27 psychiatric beds for adolescents. Although these beds likely will serve relatively few King County patients, these new resources, along with the current and oncoming beds at King County, will help ease access to inpatient psychiatric care throughout the region.

⁹¹ 10 of MultiCare Auburn's projected total of 20 new beds are already open and serving patients as of March 2016.

⁹² As part of Swedish's transition into its planned new 22-bed unit at its Ballard location, 10 beds will be closed at Swedish Cherry Hill, for a net increase of 12 beds in the number of potentially available beds. As of this writing, the new unit was scheduled to open in June 2016.

⁹³ In response to siting challenges at its originally planned Woodmont behavioral health campus site in Des Moines, an alternative location for the Valley Cities E&T facility and services was located at a former Recovery Centers of King County site in Kent. The plan is to develop the site to include both E&T and secure detoxification services, at 16 beds each.

⁹⁴ Cascade Behavioral Hospital reported it had been certified for 14 additional beds in March 2016. However, it continues to face workforce challenges and other ramp-up delays in bringing online all of the beds for which it was already certified, so it is unclear at this time when it will be able to operate at its full projected capacity.

As with many major behavioral health resource development projects, implementation has been slower, and/or capacity increases somewhat smaller, than originally projected for almost all of these projects. Siting and/or funding challenges are significant contributing factors to construction delays, while workforce recruitment difficulties impact the speed with which facilities can be brought up to full operating capacity. However, the overall anticipated capacity increase locally is still a major step forward, at 78 new acute psychiatric care beds in this county set to be available by mid-2017, with 66 of those in south King County.

In addition, inpatient capacity expansion projects are under way or anticipated in neighboring Pierce and Snohomish Counties as well as Spokane and Clark Counties. Once available, this additional capacity may reduce the number of patients from these areas who currently come to King County E&Ts for treatment. Also, overall pressure on the statewide E&T network may likewise subside somewhat as a result of these projects as well as the new beds expected to come online in King County in 2016 and 2017.⁹⁵

Even so, yet more beds are needed to rectify Washington's extremely low per capita ranking among states in psychiatric bed capacity, so King County and the CABTF will continue to seek opportunities to engage state and local partners and funding sources to boost the ability of the inpatient system to meet demand, even as community alternatives remain a preferred option.

⁹⁵ Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA), May 2016.