The Mission of Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health is to provide innovative behavioral healthcare, community education and services to individuals, families and organizations.

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Washington State, like the rest of the country, is changing the way healthcare will be delivered in the future. How are these changes affecting the services Comprehensive delivers? What can we expect from Comprehensive as it adapts to these changes?

Q. Washington State is undertaking a number of initiatives to change the way healthcare is purchased and delivered. These changes are reflective of changes occurring nationally and with a broad range of payers. Comprehensive has been moving in similar directions for some time and I expect our efforts to accelerate as the State and others pick up momentum in their work. Some of the bigger pieces of these changes include integration of behavioral health and primary care. It seems obvious that behavioral healthcare is healthcare and that the brain is a part of the body. The State and other payers are paying a lot of attention to that fact these days and are actively promoting work that supports integrated care initiatives. Comprehensive has been very active in that work for many years. We have been partnering with many organizations including community health centers, private physician practices, hospitals and others to co-locate and integrate services. We have been doing this work for more than ten years and have

Q & A continued on pages 4-7
Washington State has embarked on an effort to adhere to a common sense goal. You'll be seeing more and more adherence and increased patient understanding of the care they are receiving. This is due to improved access to care through new parity requirements for behavioral health coverage by insurers, expanded eligibility for Medicaid, and to some extent the geographic expansion of the organization. Like nearly every healthcare provider (and from what I hear, for other businesses) finding a qualified workforce is one of our biggest challenges. While we aren't at all where we want to be, I think we are doing better than many organizations. We hired 168 new employees in the past year and we are actively recruiting. We've been able to make progress in compensation and other programs to attract and retain staff and we are building more ideas into future budgets. We're making progress. We are also very active in building new programs and facilities to enable us to do even more for our communities. These new developments further increase our need for new staff but they also offer great new services to our communities. We are working on a new triage facility for Walla Walla county, additional inpatient capacity and services for specialized populations such as those suffering from first episodes of psychosis, those in the criminal justice system and for high needs children. We are expanding our offerings in the Tri-Cities and Prosser. We opened a new office in Cle Elum. We expect that we will continue to increase offerings as needs are identified.

As more and more people gain access to behavioral health services, what is Comprehensive doing to beef up staffing and facilities to meet this demand?

There is no doubt that we are seeing a tremendous increase in the number of people seeking services from Comprehensive. In fact we are seeing nearly 50% more people than we were even 2 years ago. Comprehensive has been operating in a capitated environment for some of its major contracts for many years. We have learned that by focusing on quality and outcomes and focusing on providing front end services to avoid costly services we can be successful in not only serving our communities but also in reinvesting savings into additional services that might not otherwise be available. We are actively working with other payers to develop similar arrangements to support our patients.

In summary, you can expect to see Comprehensive continue to work to not only respond but to be at the front of the new innovations in care delivery. We are excited to be a part of the changes.

Q. 2015 saw Comprehensive begin work on two major new projects at the Selah School and Yakima County Jail. Who will be served directly by those projects and are there indirect benefits to the community?

A. In early 2015, Comprehensive was solicited by the state of Washington to assist in meeting a need generated by a lawsuit against the state. The essence of the suit was that the state was not able to provide two important services to potentially mentally ill persons accused of crimes in a timely fashion. First the state was not evaluating the individuals for competence to stand trial in a timely way. Second, once the determination of lack of competence was made, the state was not able to provide services to restore the person to competence so they could participate in legal proceedings. The federal court ultimately issued an order for the state to come into compliance with certain timelines for each of these processes.

Comprehensive was ultimately asked to assist in the competency restoration process. The state is seeking to add capacity for forensic competency restoration at the state hospital and with programs like the one with Comprehensive. The state has had many challenges in building capacity at the state hospitals so Comprehensive has become a key part of meeting the state's obligations.

We entered a contract with the state in November 2015 to operate a 24 bed program at the vacant Yakima County Jail at the State Fairgrounds in Yakima. The target date for opening is March 1, 2016. This is an incredibly tight timeline. We're hiring and training the staff and doing some minor remodeling. We must
get a license for the facility and many other tasks. We’ll be down to the wire. I’m incredibly proud of our team’s efforts. We’re doing what no one else has been able to do and we will do it well. I’m pleased that we are partnering with Yakima County in the effort. It’s a win-win for all.

The Yakima Valley School (Selah School project) has been bubbling for several years. Many legislators from across the state and especially Representatives Johnson, Chandler and Walsh and Senators King and Honeyford have encouraged another win-win partnership to provide needed services, new jobs and the use of a valuable physical plant. A capital budget appropriation was secured last year to remodel the second floor of the main building. No firm time line is in place yet but the ultimate plan is to make use of the facility to meet needs for additional residential/inpatient capacity for both mental health and substance use disorder patients. Two discrete programs (16 beds each) would operate at the facility. As we wrap up some of our other projects we’ll begin moving forward on this.

Last year Comprehensive placed therapists on-site at primary care facilities like St. Mary’s in Walla Walla and there are plans to do the same at Signal Health Clinics in the Yakima area. What is driving this? And is it the future direction of healthcare in America?

Q. Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health now serves ten Washington counties. The range of services includes substance use treatment, mental health treatment, victim services, veterans programs, employee assistance programs and more. Any thought about changing your name?

A. I talked a little about this earlier. There is no doubt that this kind of integration is the wave of the future. For many people accessing behavioral health care in their primary care provider’s office makes perfect sense. There is increasing awareness that many problems presenting at primary care offices have major behavioral health components or are physical manifestations of behavioral health problems. HEADACHES, BACKACHES, SLEEP PROBLEMS, STOMACH ISSUES ARE GOOD EXAMPLES. There are also behavioral aspects of many medical problems. We’ve demonstrated success with improving control over diabetes through behavioral coaching. There is mounting evidence about the impact of behavioral health services on the overall health care spend.

Placement of our staff at clinics around our service area continues work we have been doing for many years. We have seen the results and we are anxious to do more. These efforts also support the spirit of partnership across agencies that I personally view as being a critical value for cost effectiveness and ease of access for patients.

Obviously there are many other changes in the healthcare world as I discussed earlier. Some of the other interesting trends and developments include provider consolidation, especially among hospitals, work to permit better data sharing among providers offering care to a single patient and work on outcome measurement. These are interesting times full of opportunity.

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A. Funny you should ask. We have been having some discussion about that. I’ve been uncomfortable with the mouthful our name is for some time. We’ve been talking about a number of factors. Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health or CWMH doesn’t really roll off one’s tongue. More importantly, developments over time have made our current legal name less accurate. We are definitely more than mental health and our service area has grown beyond central Washington. We are proud of the comprehensive nature of the service continuum we offer. Many people including myself refer to us as Comprehensive.

While the trend among similar organizations is to rebrand from mental health to behavioral health, I have some concerns. We battle stigma for behavioral health conditions on a daily basis. The very term “behavioral health” seems to perpetuate that. Treatment of mental health and substance use disorder conditions is healthcare just as treatment of heart disease or a cold is. I’d like to see our name reflect that tie with health care better.

I expect we will have more solidified thinking on this in the near future. I hope the readers will be on the lookout for that.
Client Facts & Revenue

2015 Staff & Client Breakdown by County

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<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
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<th>Clients</th>
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2015 Clients by Age

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Ron Gengler Tapped for New Role

Comprehensive President/CEO, Rick Weaver, announced a structural change to leadership of the agency. A new Chief Operating Officer position was established and Ron Gengler was named to fill it.

Since Rick Weaver first joined the agency, Comprehensive programs and 75 staff members have increased nearly ten-fold. Health care reform has generated massive changes in the funding and delivery of most health care services – with more on the way. This tidal wave of growth and change led Comprehensive to change to leadership of the agency. Rick Weaver, announced a structural change to leadership of the agency. A new Chief Operating Officer position was established and Ron Gengler was named to fill it.

"Ron rose to the top in a number of ways. He was articulate about his goals, recognized his strengths and weaknesses and demonstrated an ability to collaborate and work in partnership both internally and externally. The partnership piece is really important to us in that we collaborate with so many groups. Ron is a real clinical rock star as well. His leadership in the adoption of the most current evidence-based practices is recognized statewide and that will help us moving forward." says Gengler. Partnership, collaboration and accountability are the guiding values at Comprehensive. To those shared values Gengler adds, "Throughout my 23 years with Comprehensive, I have worked with some amazingly gifted people. From the Board of Directors, who have a strong and collaborative vision of community services, to Rick and his clear and supportive leadership, to every other co-worker who understands that we have a wonderful opportunity to have a positive influence in the lives of those we serve."

In order to remain a leader we must continually challenge ourselves to improve and recognize the quality of services we offer," says Gengler. "Comprehensive is considered a leader in providing innovative and extremely useful services throughout Washington. To meet those challenges Comprehensive started at the center – their website. Mike Norton, Comprehensive Vice-President, explains, "The website is a central tool in communicating with the public, our partners, our patients, potential employees and even our co-workers." Partnership, collaboration and accountability are the guiding values at Comprehensive.

"Each month thousands of people interact with our site," says Norton. Reaction to the new site has been better than expected. "We have received great feedback," Norton says. "I really think the content on our website is relevant, interesting and helpful. And our Facebook page just became the most popular community mental health agency in Washington state. Give it a try! I think you will “like” it."

Comprehensive's commitment to innovative healthcare includes ongoing efforts to update the website – looking for new and better ways to use the medium. Norton says, "We want our website to be more than a brochure for the agency. It should invite people to learn and interact with us. We update our site continually. It will just keep getting better and more useful as time goes on."

The website overhaul was just the beginning of Comprehensive's communication upgrade in 2015. The plunge was taken into social media, too. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have been added to the arsenal. "We have to engage," says Norton. "Social media is how a growing percentage of people interact with friends, the community and the world." The three platforms are in varying degrees of development. But the agency is committed to expanding communication efforts on all fronts.

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Call (509) 575-4084 with comments or suggestions, or visit our website at www.cwcmh.org. to learn more about the services offered by Comprehensive.