

WASHINGTON STATE REPORT FOR 2019

The past two years have been extremely trying for the state-run facilities or Residential Habilitation Centers (RHCs). Fircrest School in Shoreline and Rainier School in Buckley had 2 of their Program Area Teams (PATs) under a Settlement Agreement between the CMS attorneys & the Asst. AG in WA state. Continuous Active Treatment Programs and lack of Nursing Facility at Rainier were core issues named by the Auditors.

The Agreement called for an independent consultant to be hired. Westcare Healthcare Management was brought in to review and suggest changes to the overall programs, in particular – Continuous Active Treatment. Rainier was cited for not moving residents who were in need of Nursing Facility Care to other RHCs or into the Community. Both Fircrest PAT A and Rainier PAT E implemented suggested changes and were eventually cleared from a decertification threat.

Background History for Rainier School: Buckley is a small rural community about 50 miles outside Seattle. Rainier is the only RHC that does not have a Nursing Facility on Campus. It has been the norm for the Developmental Disability Administration to allow residents “to age in place”. This is not the procedure enacted by CMS in 2015 when rules were amended to have individuals “benefit from Active Treatment” or they were no longer eligible for ICF care.

For years Rainier School was the primary employer for the city. Recently, large box stores have opened in the county & they have become a major employer. This leaves positions at the RHC vacant. Our DDA budgets have been drastically reduced since 2008, resulting in inadequate staffing levels. Two major WA Supreme Court Decisions regarding full funding for Education and a severe overhaul to our Mental Health Program have move DD lower on the food chain.

In January the Auditors returned to Rainier and looked at PAT A. Survey results called for a notice of decertification, which was appealed & denied. Our State Budget Proviso calls for the closure of this PAT by 8/31/19. Again, Rainier was faced with the issues surrounding lack of a Nursing Facility and Continuous Active Treatment and other issues regarding health & safety. Of the 86 PAT residents, sixty must be re-located. Some are choosing moves to other RHCs (either NF or ICF), if there is availability. Others are being offered SOLA (State Operated Living Alternatives, staffed by State Employees); Supported Living or Adult Family Homes. The remaining residents of the PAT will be absorbed into PAT E and recently surveyed and certified PAT C. Movement into the Community has been very slow due to lack of placement and service availability.

Since then, all RHCs have been surveyed and have met the criteria for certification.

Disability Rights of Washington (DRW) issued a report, <https://disabilityrightswa.org/reports/chaotic-and-dangerous/>, in mid-May calling Rainier School “**Chaotic and Dangerous**” – **How the state’s poor management of Rainier harms residents with developmental disabilities**. There are valid points made in this report. Why hasn’t the Department & Administration been enforcing the rules & regulations that would keep residents safe & healthy? These questions must be answered.

The other 3 RHCs (Fircrest in Shoreline, Lakeland Village at Medical Lake & Yakima Valley School in Selah) continue to serve residents. All are under the watchful eye of Residential Care Services, the inspection & investigative surveyors on behalf of CMS.

Terri Anderson
WinchesterWillie@comcast.net
425.788.4529

May, 2019