



April 22, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Partners of Oregon State Hospital (OSH)
From: Dolly Matteucci, OSH Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Emergency, Temporary Restriction of Oregon State Hospital
Admissions related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and
influx of Aid and Assist admissions

To protect the health and safety of patients and staff at Oregon State Hospital (OSH), the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) was granted approval from Federal Court to temporarily restrict admissions between Tuesday, April 13, 2021 and Monday April 26, 2021, due to a lack of hospital beds available for a new cohort of patients at that time. Fortunately, OSH was able to resume admissions on Monday, April 19, 2021, one week earlier than anticipated, due to patient discharges. The number of people needing services at OSH is outpacing efforts to discharge people who no longer need hospital-level care.

As the current imbalance of discharges will most likely continue to impact hospital capacity, the Federal Court has granted OHA's request to provide regular status updates to the Court on the hospital's ongoing ability to admit cohorts. We endeavor to keep our partners updated on our admissions status as well.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, OSH has worked with state epidemiologists to take comprehensive precautions to protect the health of both patients and staff. This includes accepting new patients each week in cohorts of 19-23. Cohorts remain quarantined together on an admission monitoring unit until they test



negative for COVID-19. Then the new patients transfer to other units within the hospital, and the admission monitoring unit is cleaned and prepared for the next cohort. In this way, OSH has safely admitted 194 patients in the last two months: 101 patients in February and 93 patients in March. The number of admissions in these last two months are above the 2019 average monthly admission rate of 87 patients per month, prior to the onset of the pandemic in March of 2020.

The number of new Aid and Assist orders has significantly increased, with a high of 82 orders per month in the first three months of 2021. So far, the lowest number of new orders per month this year has been 61, which is close to the maximum number OSH received in any month in 2017. The influx of new patients has now outpaced OSH's ability to discharge patients under Aid and Assist orders, neither to community placements nor back to jail to stand trial.

As a result, hospital beds are not opening up at the pace needed for OSH to continue admitting new patients, and OSH has reached its limits. OSH is and has been actively working to find placements for every patient who can be discharged, but over the last few months, there are too many patients currently in the hospital for OSH to keep up with admission demand.

OHA has approached the Legislature seeking funding for additional beds and resources – both in this biennium (ending June 30, 2021) and in the upcoming 2021-23 biennium. Some of the proposals the Legislative Assembly is considering would provide more funding for community restoration services and beds. These proposals should assist with placement possibilities in the future, but they will not result in a short-term solution.

We recognize the hardship temporary admission restrictions present to our community partners. OSH will continue all efforts to create space for new admissions, but weekly admissions may sometimes not be possible. Going forward, the hospital will admit cohorts each week that we are able to discharge enough patients to have room.

It will take a coordinated effort with participants from across the behavioral health continuum coming together to address this issue. OHA has invited representatives from the Association of Community Mental Health Plans, the

Behavioral Health Directors from the CCOs, and Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems to a series of meetings to develop a list of issues, as well as strategies and timelines to address them. The goal is to develop the strategies together, share them with our respective leadership, and implement them. In the meantime, OSH will continually assess its capacity to accept admissions on a weekly basis and communicate with stakeholders when admissions are not possible.