

**DSHS MENTAL
ILLNESS PREVALENCE
STUDY FOLLOW-UP**

REPORT 04-1

FOLLOW-UP REPORT

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STATE OF WASHINGTON

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Summary

DSHS's Mental Health Division has just completed a legislatively mandated study on the prevalence of serious mental illness within the state. Prevalence of mental illness in the different regions of Washington is significant because it is one of the factors that must be considered when allocating nearly \$750 million in biennial funding to the state's Regional Support Networks. The study updates an earlier prevalence study known as the PEMINS study. JLARC's 2000 audit found a statistical relationship between the percentage of seriously mentally ill persons in need of publicly funded mental health services in a Regional Support Network (RSN) – as estimated in the earlier study – and the percentage of Medicaid-eligible persons in an RSN. The updated study indicates a slightly less strong relationship between those needing publicly funded mental health services and those eligible for state medical assistance programs. However, considerations of how mental health funding is apportioned to regions across the state should reflect **all** funding streams, including Medicaid funding, other federal resources, and all state resources for both in-patient hospitalizations and community-based services for mentally ill individuals.

Introduction

The Mental Health Division (MHD) of the Department of Social and Health Services has just completed a legislatively mandated study on the prevalence of mental illness within the state. The mandate followed a recommendation in JLARC's 2000 performance audit of the state's public mental health system. Prevalence of mental illness in the different regions of Washington is significant because it is one of the factors considered when allocating nearly \$750 million in biennial funding to the state's Regional Support Networks (RSNs). This brief JLARC staff report reviews pertinent background information, highlights the study process and key results, and discusses implications related to funding. The Executive Summary of the DSHS report is included as Appendix 1