

Washington state psychiatric hospital called 'hell'

Conditions fail safety standards

By MARTHA BELLISLE
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Behind tall brick walls and secure windows, hundreds of patients at Washington state's largest psychiatric hospital live in conditions that fail U.S. health and safety standards, while overworked nurses and psychiatrists say they are navigating a system that punishes employees who speak out despite critical staffing shortages.

"They don't have enough staff to protect patients, or provide them with the bare minimum of care," said Lisa Bowser, whose mother spent two years at Western State Hospital and suffered dozens of falls and assaults.

"Going there was like going into hell," said Bowser, who has sued the state-run facility. "I honestly thought they would kill her before I could get her out."

U.S. and state regulators for years have found health and safety violations at the 800-bed hospital, ranging from assaults on staff to escapes of dangerous patients, including a man accused of torturing a woman to death. Even after that 2016 escape, a nursing supervisor told The Associated Press that a patient who had been charged with murder



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren
Washington State Gov. Jay Inslee, third from right, speaks in front of Western State Hospital in Lakewood in May.

and found not guilty by reason of insanity was placed in a less secure ward and the nurse faced retaliation after reporting the danger to nonviolent patients.

Despite a shakeup in leadership and vows to correct problems, the hospital continually puts patients at risk, according to a surprise federal inspection. Some didn't get oxygen and blood-sugar checks; injuries weren't properly treated; they were held in restraints too long; and the building remained a fire hazard. Some violations were cited in inspections going back to 2015.

After years of chances, the federal Centers for Medi-

care and Medicaid Services stripped the hospital in Lakewood of its certification and federal funding, totaling \$53 million a year and about 20 percent of its budget.

Gov. Jay Inslee said he wants the state to change the way it handles the mentally ill with a system that allows some patients to live in smaller facilities but that it's making inroads.

"We have been on a course correction to turn this ship around and we are continuing on that course of improvement," the Democrat told AP.

'They wouldn't bathe her'

Bowser's mother, Sharon

Struthers, was committed to the hospital for depression in 2014 and stayed through 2015. Bowser said she began to see bruising on her mother's body and found fungus covering her feet.

"They wouldn't bathe her," Bowser said. "She would tell me that another patient hit her."

Bowser said her mother's room was covered with garbage, and she began to suffer falls that broke her arm and hip. Her mother also was sexually assaulted on several occasions, Bowser said.

Staff thought a registered sex offender placed on Struthers' ward was safe around older patients because he was a "child molester, not adult rapist," according to an email that licensed mental health counselor Mark Allen sent to hospital officials and was acquired by Bowser's lawyer.

Allen said the encounter appeared to be between two consenting adults. The problem is Struthers was committed to the hospital because she could not take care of herself, said Bowser's lawyer, James Beck.

Struthers died at a different facility in 2016. Bowser sued Western State Hospital and the state Department of Social and Health Services, which oversees the facility, claiming abuse and neglect.

The agency declined to

comment on the allegations, referring questions to the state attorney general's office, which didn't respond to multiple emails and calls.

Kelly Stowe, a spokeswoman for the Department of Social and Health Services, said the agency is working with the governor's office on funding options after the recent inspection cost the hospital federal dollars.

Employees say management punishes those who challenge decisions.

Nursing supervisor Paul Vilja filed a complaint last December after a man who was found not guilty by reason of insanity in the deaths of multiple people was moved from a secure ward into one with limited security.

"I said you are endangering my patients and he's a risk for escape," Vilja told the AP.

The health department agreed with Vilja's concerns, but he was moved to the medical records department within a week. He couldn't work with patients for six months but was recently told he can move back to the ward. Vilja has filed a whistleblower complaint.

Retaliation

Psychiatrists said they faced similar treatment.

Three said they were reprimanded for objecting to management decisions that put patients and staff at risk. Two were fired, and the other was

removed from patient care.

Dr. Michael Quayle sued the hospital claiming he faced a hostile work environment after reporting expired and improperly stored meat. A jury awarded him about \$550,000 in December 2016.

Dr. Joseph Wainer wrote an editorial in a local newspaper and statement for a court claiming "a systemic culture of retaliation, discrimination and bullying." He was put under investigation and told to leave the hospital.

Dr. Jay Jawad said he objected to a management decision to discharge his patients and faced investigation and loss of his clinical responsibilities.

Wainer and Jawad were later told that the investigations were closed with no findings. They have sued the hospital and the health department claiming retaliation.

The facility has lost 15 psychiatrists in three years with no new hires, according to a hospital worker who didn't want to be named for fear of being fired. And instead of nurses, the institution hired "nurse educators" who don't see patients, the worker said.

Lawmakers have pressed the hospital to create a staffing model that will allow adequate funding for nurses, but the facility keeps asking for overtime funds that are "unaccountable," state Rep. Laurie Jinkins said.

Tensions flare up at Portland ICE protest

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Officials say two protesters were arrested and two federal officers suffered minor injuries Monday in a flare up at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters in Portland.

Protesters have been stationed near the facility for weeks, seeking to end the Trump administration's zero-tolerance immigration policy.

Rob Sperling, a spokesman for the division responsible for protecting federal buildings, told KGW the

generally peaceful protest grew heated Monday when several protesters pulled down tape that separated demonstrators from the ICE building.

Federal officers followed the protesters into a nearby camp and were soon surrounded. Other federal officers used pepper spray to get the officers out of the protest camp.

Two protesters were arrested on charges of assault and trespassing on federal property.

Another protester was arrested earlier Monday in an unrelated incident.

Junction City building explodes; racial slur, symbol found

Associated Press

JUNCTION CITY — A building northwest of Eugene in Junction City exploded and burst into flames.

The Register-Guard reported that authorities, including the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Junction City police are investigating the cause of the early Monday explosion and fire.

Authorities say a swastika

and a racial slur were found spray painted at the scene.

Junction City Police Chief Bob Morris says the cause of the fire is suspicious. Authorities on Monday had not been able to contact the building's owners.

State business records show Irene and Devon Huntley bought the building in 2015. Morris said they were renovating the building, which had been used as an insurance office, to become a restaurant.

Police, business leaders speak out against state sanctuary law repeal

Voters to decide in November

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — Law enforcement and business leaders on Monday announced their opposition to an initiative petition to repeal the statewide sanctuary law.

Multnomah County Sheriff Mike Reese said the law prohibiting the use of state and local resources to enforce federal immigration law has worked well since it was passed more than 30 years ago.

"Our current law allows police agencies to appropriately share information with our federal partners when a crime occurs. It creates clear guidelines to help local law enforcement navigate the complicated immigration strategies and policies at the federal level," Reese said. "It keeps our local police focused on solving crimes by letting victims and witnesses know that they can report crime to us without fear of their immigration status. It also ensures our deputy sheriffs and police officers don't become embroiled in the politics of immigration enforcement."

The state law applies when



Jonathan House/Portland Tribune

Andrea Williams, executive director of Causa, a statewide immigrant rights group, speaks to reporters about the launch of the official campaign against Initiative Petition 22, which would repeal Oregon's 31-year-old sanctuary law.

a person's only crime is being in the country illegally.

Reese appeared with Sandra McDonough of the Portland Business Alliance on Monday at the Northwest Health Foundation in Portland to explain why they oppose Initiative Petition 22. The appearance was one of five events held around the state to mark the beginning of the campaign against the repeal, Oregonians United Against Profiling.

More than 80 businesses, labor organizations, faith and civil rights groups and law enforcement leaders have joined the coalition against IP 22.

Other law enforcement leaders, including Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel, also have expressed

support for the sanctuary law.

On the national level, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and other police organizations have opposed involving local law enforcement in federal immigration enforcement.

The Oregonians United Against Profiling campaign against IP 22 earned that name from the history of the sanctuary law, said Andrea Williams, executive director of Causa, a statewide immigrant rights organization.

"At that time, Oregonians, including U.S. citizens, were being harassed by local police demanding to see their papers, and people were afraid to go to the police for help," she said.

Oregon lawmakers passed the sanctuary law in 1987 in response to widespread racial

profiling of immigrants. In one high-profile case in 1977, Delmiro Trevino, a U.S. citizen of Mexican descent, was arrested at a restaurant in Independence because police suspected that he was undocumented. He later filed a class-action suit, and his lawyer, Rocky Barilla, went on to win election in 1986 as a state representative — becoming the first Latino elected to that position in the state's history. He introduced the legislation that established the sanctuary law, winning support from both Democrats and Republicans.

"The most important job for local police is solving local crimes and keeping communities safe," Williams said. "Police need the trust of the community to do their jobs."

Cynthia Kendoll, president of Oregonians for Immigration Reform, who helped organize signature gathering for IP 22, was not immediately available for comment. But Kendoll has said in the past that part of the goal of the initiative is to prevent undocumented immigrants from using local services intended for Oregonians.

IP 22 appears likely to land on the November ballot after sponsors turned in more than 110,000 signatures to the Oregon Secretary of State's Office by the deadline.

The secretary of state's office is in the process of verifying the signatures.

Herbicide may have killed trees in central Oregon

Associated Press

BEND — A weed-killer that killed thousands of ponderosa pines near Sisters has been linked to the deaths of other trees outside Sunriver and possibly across Oregon.

Dale Mitchell, the Oregon Department of Agriculture program manager, says an inves-

tigation found that the active ingredient in Perspective may have killed dozens of ponderosa pines outside Sunriver.

The Bulletin reported the Deschutes County Road Department sprayed the herbicide along two main roads that lead in and out of Sunriver in 2013 and 2014.

Chris Doty, the depart-

ment's director, says the roadside spraying is done to reduce the amount of flammable grass.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has notified the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency of the situation. The offices are discussing the possibility of strengthening the language on the label for Perspective.

Southern resident orca population hits 30-year low

Associated Press

SEATTLE — A count of orcas in the Pacific Northwest indicates that no calves have been born for the last three years, resulting in a 30-year population low.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported the annual census of Puget Sound's killer whales has counted 75 across three southern resident pods.

The census also reported two orcas missing and pre-

sumed dead.

Researchers say the dwindling whale numbers are linked to pollution and a decreasing primary food source.

Pollution can accumulate in the orca's prey and get

stored in their fat, making the killer whales more susceptible to disease by a suppressed immune system. The main food source for orcas is Chinook salmon, which are not as numerous as they once were.



Ron and Sherry Howser of Oceanside, Ca. observed their **40th anniversary** with re-commitment vows and a ceremony on June 17, 2018 at the home of her parents Ken and DeLores Richards of Astoria.

In celebration, songs were provided by their son Nick and wife Ashley, sister Lori and friend Dale, and her parents. The couple dressed in Ruby Red colors in commemoration of 40 years.

Sherry and Ron were married in Clatskanie, Oregon on June 17, 1978 at the Church of Christ. Sherry was raised in Clatskanie and the couple met after graduation. They have sons Nick Howser (Portland) and Jon Howser (Kelso).

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