

Medicaid: ‘No matter what, they will be taken care of’

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With two coordinated care organizations, providers like Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, the county’s mental health and substance abuse treatment contractor, would have to work with two different insurance administrators. That means complying with two different sets of coverage rules and two different ways of getting services authorized, Haley said.

“That’s twice as much work at the same clinic,” Haley said.

The county Board of Commissioners echoed similar concerns, writing a letter in April asking the state to consider awarding just one contract for the county.

“The county has concerns that by allowing for multiple CCO’s, the already limited resources available for these services would be further reduced by the need for increased administration staff simply to be able to process differing payment and contracting methodologies,” the letter stated.

The health authority will consider the feasibility of multiple coordinated care organizations, as well as evidence of community support, when evaluating the applications, Hagen said.

“Ultimately, our goal is to assure that we are transforming health care for every Oregonian by reducing costs, improving access to mental health services, rewarding providers for improving health outcomes, and addressing the issues outside the doctor’s office that impact health, such as access to housing,” Hagen said in an email. “Having community support will be a



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Competition could shake up the regional administration of the Oregon Health Plan.

necessary piece of successful implementation of those goals.”

Kevin Campbell, the CEO of Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc., said, in his experience in rural Oregon, “local control has been something that people have strived for. And regionalization is always something that people at the local level never wanted coming from Salem.

“They don’t want to go top down.”

GOBHI points to its successful partnership with Moda in Eastern Oregon as a model.

“I think the value is that it’s local providers that are taking care of the folks right here in town,” said Bonnie Thompson, the director of health system improvements at GOBHI. “So you’re talking local caregivers that are involved. They have a voice. They have ownership in the CCO and they’re

going to be able to really help drive what’s going to work for this community here locally.”

Columbia Pacific is moving toward a model to better integrate behavioral health with other health services. They hope it will remove barriers for patients and eventually lead to more ways to access mental health treatment outside of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare.

“We are very, very excited about how we can better meet our patients needs through a much more coordinated model,” Haley said.

Contract proposals are being evaluated and will be awarded in July. Haley said regardless of any changes happening with coordinated care organizations, patients should expect the same level of care.

“No matter what, they will be taken care of,” she said.

Cart: Unique sides include gallo pinto and queso frito

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The food cart’s tacos, wraps and bows include many Hispanic staples like carne and pollo asadas, but the couple focuses on seafood dishes, too, with specialties like shrimp ceviche and grilled mahi-mahi. The sides trend more unique, including gallo pinto, a mixture of sauteed beans and rice considered a national symbol in Nicaragua; queso frito, a seared slab of cheese; and seared plantains.

The couple had sought a spot amid the growing food cart scene in Astoria. After striking out, they reached out to Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer, who put them in touch with Community Development Director Kevin Cronin, who sees Tres Bro’s as part of the city’s efforts to revitalize downtown.

“It’s a good sign if we have a food truck like this interested in coming downtown,” Cronin said.

The city has provided electrical and water to the lot, where Lopez and Colby hope to see more food carts. Another food truck, Taqueria Pelayos,

recently opened at the corner of Anchor Avenue and Harbor Drive. Next door to Tres Bro’s, popular breakfast spot Arnie’s Cafe is beginning the buildout of its new location in the former NAPA Auto Parts store, with hopes of opening in July.

In the coming weeks, the city will go out to bid for a landscaping project along Main Avenue between Harbor Drive and Warrenton High School.

The city is getting some takers on a downtown facade improvement grant program and hoping to get Clatsop Community College’s historic preservation and restoration program to study the history of the vacant, brown Fenton Building at First Street and Main Avenue, one of the only historic structures downtown, Cronin said.

The city has also been looking to bring in a brewery as an anchor tenant downtown to attract other businesses to give locals and tourists alike more of a reason to hang out. “That would be a game-changer for downtown,” he said.

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