

Mr. Mayor,

The Tulsa Psychiatric Association would like to inform you on the consequences of proposed agency cuts to the city of Tulsa. As you may have heard, Governor Mary Fallin ordered the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to eliminate 75 million dollars from their operating budget. ODMHSAS has responded by stating that the only way to overcome such a large cut is to completely eliminate either outpatient or inpatient services. Either one of these cuts would decimate the state of Oklahoma and the city of Tulsa.

Outpatient services in Tulsa include large contracts to the community mental health agencies. These agencies treat more mental health patients than any other entity in Tulsa. Without this funding, a majority of Tulsans will not have access to psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists and other services. These agencies include one of the few places for children to receive mental health help. This cut means that a majority of the mentally ill in Tulsa, including those with severe mental illness (such as Schizophrenia) will not have access to medications. Untreated children will place a tremendous burden on school resources and have dire consequences. The amount of untreated adults will decimate the labor force, and place a large strain on the Tulsa Police Department. As individuals attempt to self-medicate, there is likely to be a rise in drug use and subsequent criminal activity.

Inpatient services in Tulsa includes Tulsa Center for Behavioral Health (TCBH). TCBH is the local crises stabilization hospital for the uninsured. This 56 bed hospital is reserved for those patients whose mental illness has placed them at a danger to themselves or to others. It also takes care of individuals who are so mentally ill that they cannot take care of themselves. All the other hospitals in Tulsa rely on TCBH to take care of the uninsured. This hospital is also involved in training future psychiatrists through partnerships with the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University. If this hospital were to close, Tulsa would lose this pipeline and all the future physicians that go with it. Most importantly, however, is that without this facility, Tulsa Police and local Tulsa hospitals would have no options as to where to transport the mentally ill. There would be no options except to let these individuals remain on the streets of Tulsa, unmedicated and suffering from severe mental illness.

The Tulsa Psychiatric Association implores you to work with the state government to ensure these cuts do not happen. If they do take place, then we encourage to not waste any time in increasing the amount of city resources that will be required to deal with the impending decimation of services. Thank you for your time and attention to this emergent matter.

Sincerely,

The Tulsa Psychiatric Association

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