



# Spokane Regional Behavioral Health Ombuds 2021 Annual Report



# Introduction: SCRBH Ombuds

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The Spokane County Regional Behavioral Health Ombuds has been providing advocacy and supportive services to individuals who are receiving, have received, or are eligible to receive behavioral health services in our six-county region of Adams, Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane and Stevens counties.

This 2021 report will encompass year three of Behavioral Health Ombuds services for our six-county region and at times will compare our statistics with what occurred in our year two of 2020.

At the end of this report, we will list our goals for the coming 2022 year, which will include information about the new statewide behavioral health advocate that will assume all behavioral health Ombuds services beginning October 1, 2022.



# Summary of Activities

28 total Cases

*Amerigroup: 3*

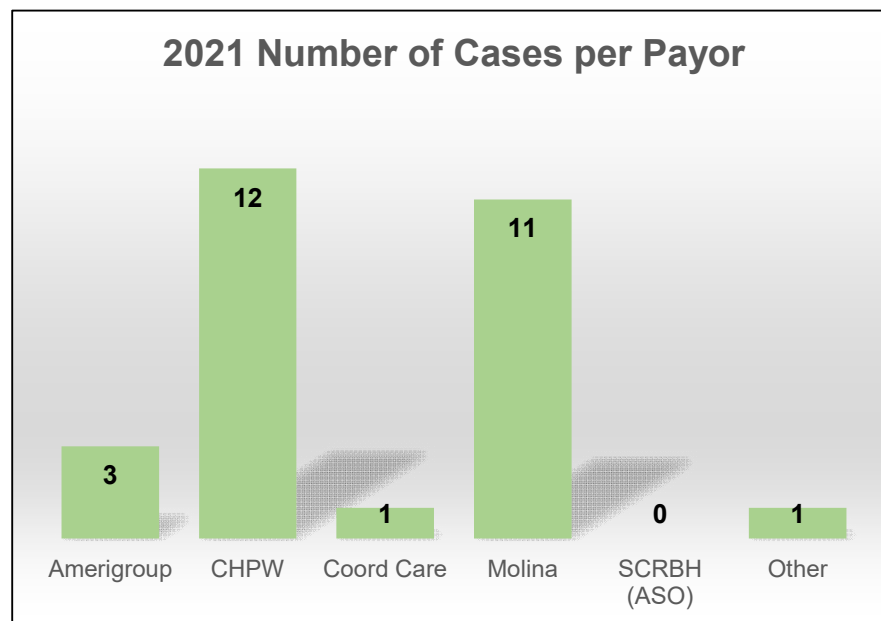
*Community Health Plan  
of Washington: 12*

*Coordinated Care: 1*

*Molina: 11*

*SCRBH (ASO): 0*

*Other: 1*



# Summary of Activities

- *The Ombuds met with **28** individuals remotely (Zoom, Teams, or Phone) or in person in 2021, and participated in **64** client or client related provider phone meetings*
- *The Ombuds met with providers and community stakeholders or attended relevant meetings **210** times in 2021.*
- *The Ombuds received **213** information and referral calls and emails in 2021.*
- *The Ombuds provided or attended **37** trainings in 2021.*
- *The Ombuds spoke with clients **171** times in 2021.*



# Examples of Grievance Cases

**Access**: An individual received a letter from the ASO informing them they had been approved for behavioral health outpatient services, however when the individual contacted their preferred provider, they were told they were not eligible. The letter did not clarify that they had been approved for Clubhouse services, and not therapeutic outpatient services. Ombuds and the ASO worked together to amend the content of the letter when notifying someone they are approved for outpatient services and will include the type of service approved.

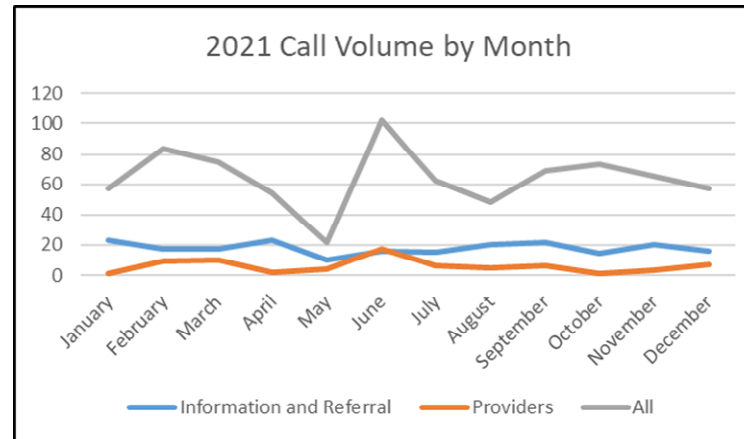
**Dignity and Respect**: An individual who was inpatient at a mental health facility contacted Ombuds because he felt he wasn't being listened to. Once ROIs (release to share HIPAA related information) were signed, Ombuds contacted the inpatient facility and explained the individual's concerns. A team meeting was held, and when Ombuds followed up the individual said they were satisfied they were being heard.

**Phone Calls Not Returned and Quality/Appropriateness of Services**: An individual who felt they had been improperly discharged from outpatient services and was not getting return calls when they left messages contacted Ombuds for assistance. The outpatient agency investigated and found that there was a misperception the individual wanted to discharge, however, they also did not send a letter to confirm discharge as was their policy. As resolution the agency agreed to do retraining with staff and had also implemented a reminder in their electronic medical records system to avoid this happening again in the future.

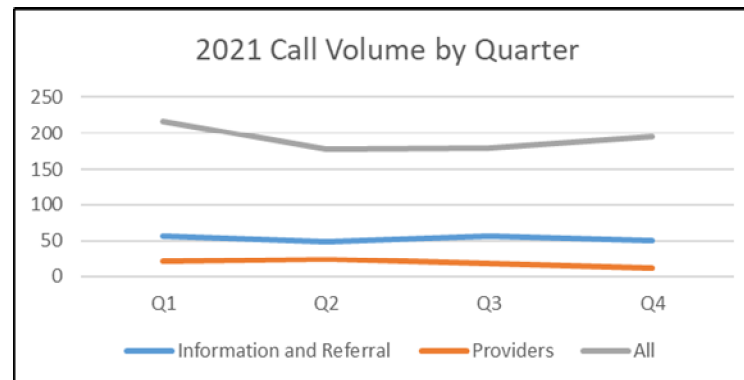


# Call Volume in 2021

When looking at the 2021 Call Volume by Month, the swings in volume can be seen.

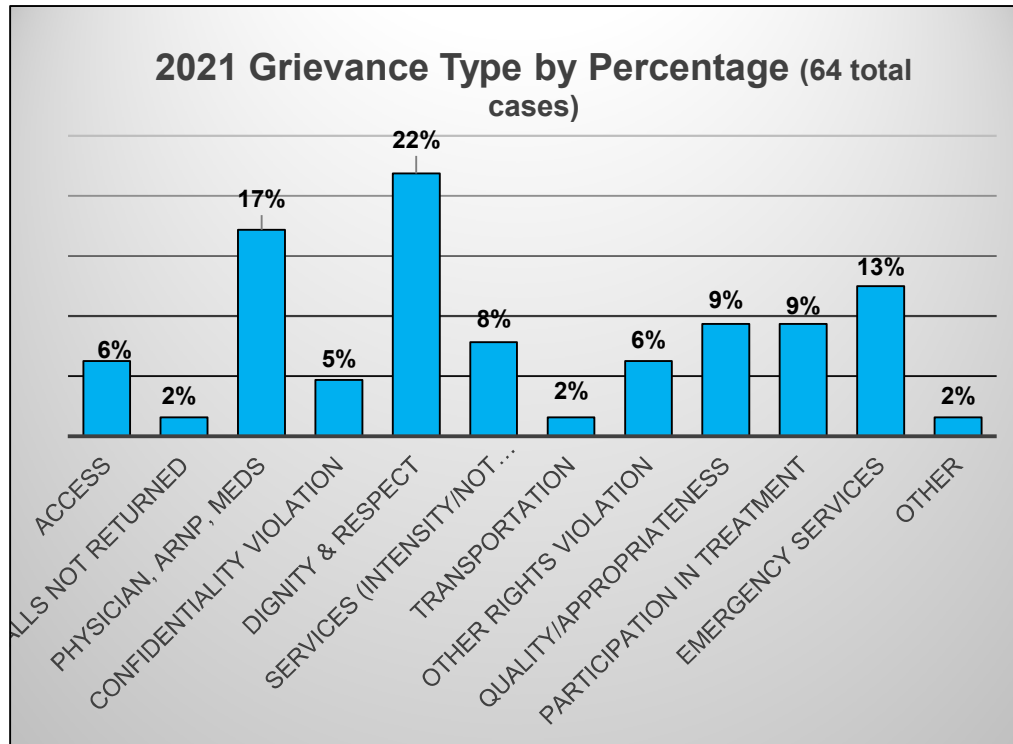


When looking at the Call Volume by Quarter, the swings have evened out, and largely stay at the same levels.





# Types of Grievances 2021



## Top Three Most Common Grievance types:

### Dignity and Respect 22%

*Issues regarding courtesy, tone of voice, language or other treatment seen as disrespect.*

### Physicians, ARNPs, Medications 17%

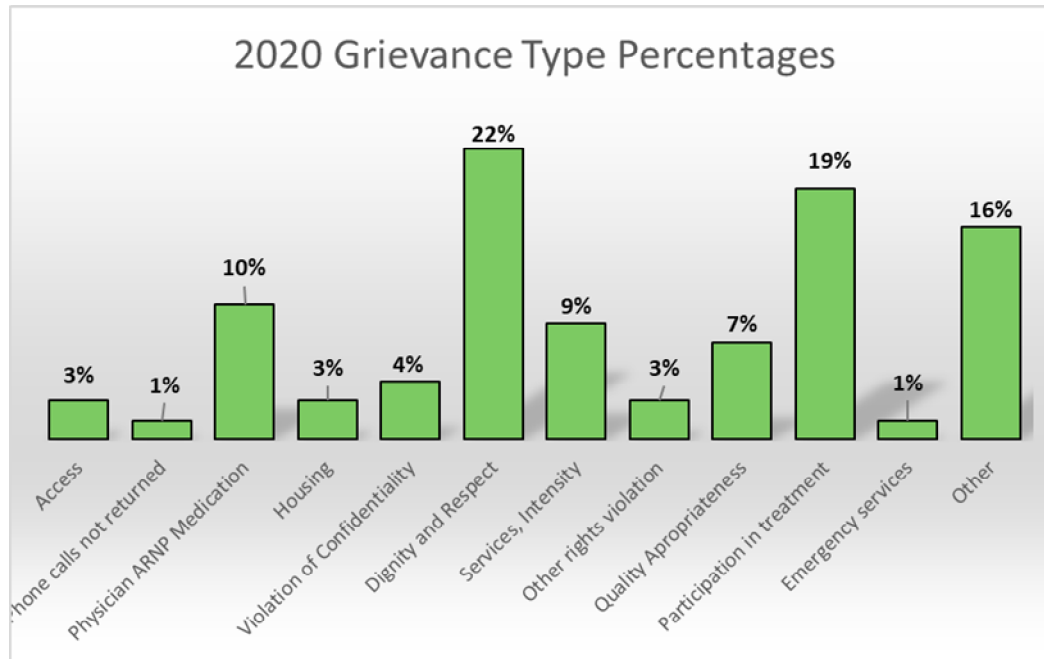
*Issues with communication, scheduling, or disagreement with specific medications between the individual and the prescriber.*

### Emergency Services 13%

*Grievances that are related to services provided by crisis lines, evaluation and treatment centers, crisis stabilization, hospital alternative programs, or detainments.*

# Types of Grievances 2020

For comparison to 2021



## Top Three Most Common Grievance types 2020:

### Dignity and Respect 22%

*Issues regarding courtesy, tone of voice, language or other treatment seen as disrespect.*

### Participation in Treatment 19%

*Issues regarding the individual feeling their voice is not being included in treatment planning or when a parent is dissatisfied with level of participation in their child's treatment.*

### Other 16%

*This category is used for hard to categorize issues. Examples 2020: Policy and oversight, intake process, alleged false urinalysis, discrimination due to medical condition, fear of retaliation*

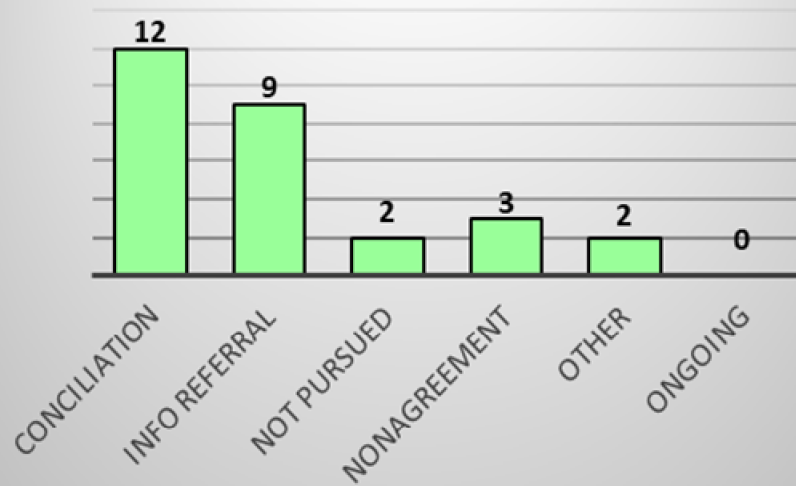




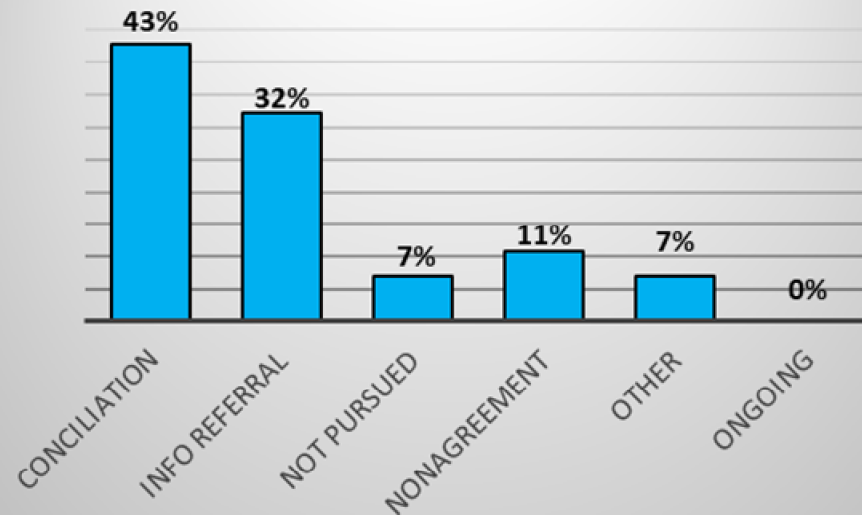
# Grievance Resolutions

The most common resolution type was Conciliation, meaning an agreeable resolution was offered. The next highest was Information and Referral, meaning the resolution ended as a non-grievance.

### 2021 Resolution by Type

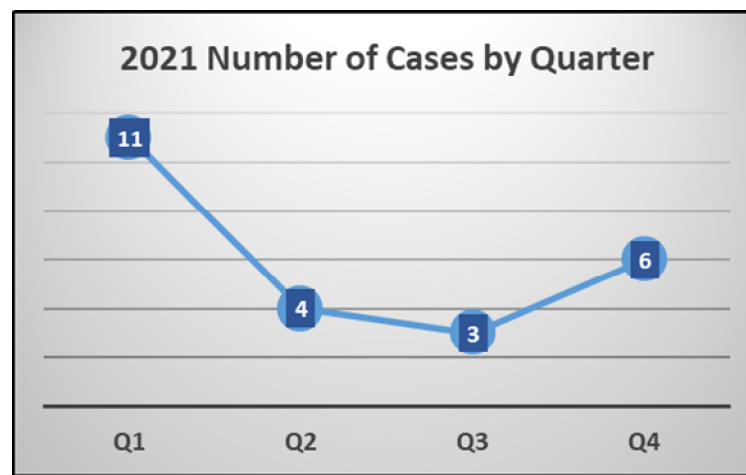
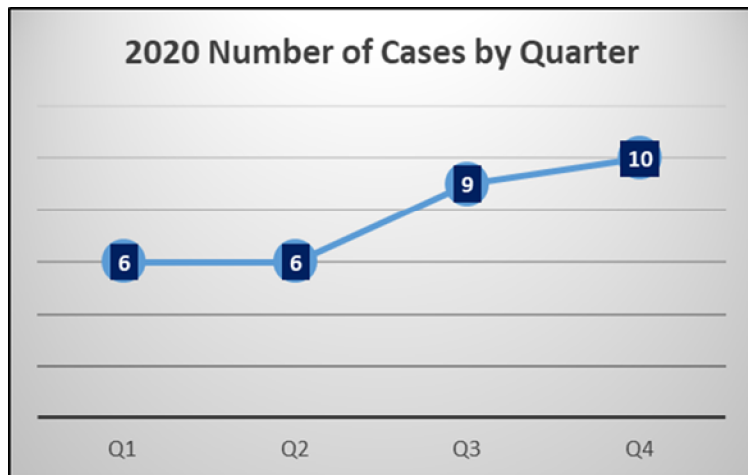


### 2021 Resolution Type Percentages

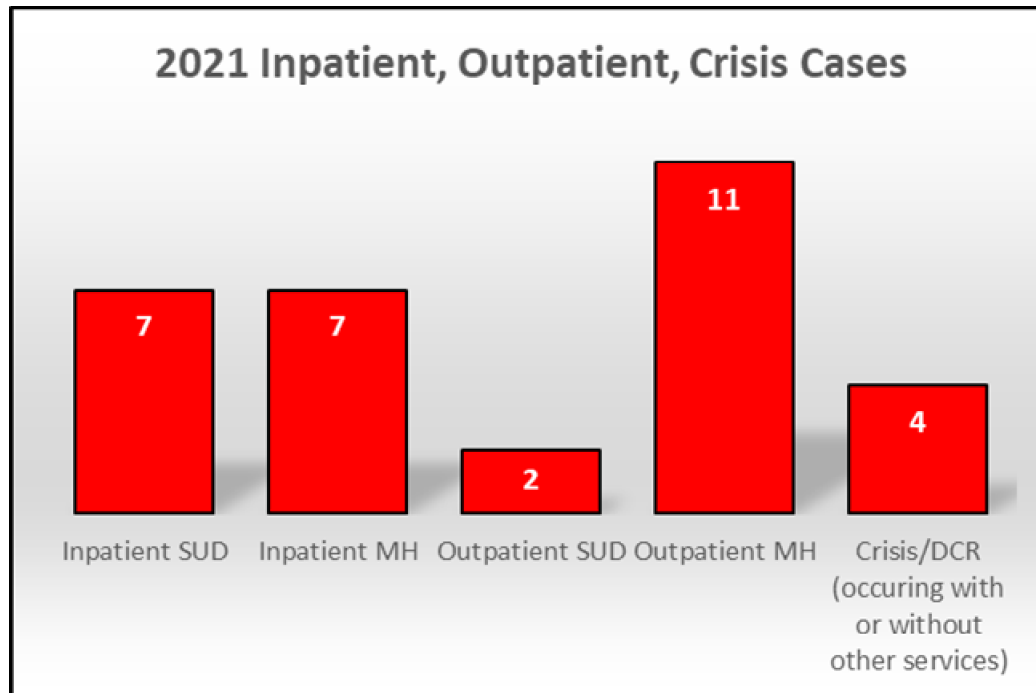


# Grievance Cases by Quarter

Below are two charts that encompass the years 2020 and 2021. On the right is 2021 Number of Grievance Cases by Quarter, and on the left, the 2020 Number of Grievance Cases by quarter.



# Inpatient, Outpatient, Crisis



Cases involving inpatient Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health treatment services were evenly split.

Outpatient Mental Health services cases were the most prevalent cases.

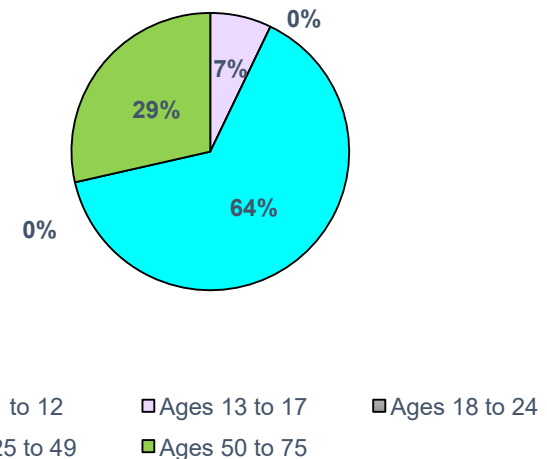
Crisis/DCR cases were counted according to the concerns presented. Only one case was specific to DCR services and was included in the emergency services grievance type when presented to the provider agency.



# Grievances by Age

- **29%** of Grievances received were about services provided to an adult older than the age of 50.
- **No** Grievances received were about services provided to adults between the ages of 18 and 24.
- **64%** of Grievances were about services for adults aged 25 - 49
- **7%** of Grievances received were about services provided to youth ages 13 -17.
- **No** Grievances received were about services provided to youth ages 1-12.
- Average age of Individual in services that shared a Grievance with the Ombuds is **41**.

2021 Age Range of Clients Served



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OMBUDS SERVICES

Beginning October 1, 2022, a private non-profit will become the new statewide Behavioral Advocate service provider.

- *Inform constituents of the coming changes.*
- *Once new contractor is known, provide that information to area providers*
- *Modify services to begin readiness for the new Ombuds provider to assume responsibility as of October 1, 2022.*



# Planned Improvements for 2022

## EDUCATE PROVIDER AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- *Meet with providers to share updated Ombuds information to ensure that accurate information is being provided to Individuals in services about the coming changes.*
- *Use virtual meetings where needed, move to in person outreach when deemed safe by state and local COVID-19 guidelines.*
- *Outreach to Managed Care Organizations to advance continuity of care for Individuals in services.*





# THANK YOU

Please reach out to us at Spokane County's Community Services, Housing, and Community Development Department, should you have any questions or concerns



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