



Washington State Senate

102 Irv Newhouse Building
PO Box 40428
Olympia, WA 98504-0428

Senator Steve O'Ban
28th Legislative District

Phone: (360) 786-7654
E-mail: steve.oban@leg.wa.gov

October 31, 2018

Secretary Cheryl Strange
Department of Health and Social Services
PO Box 45310
Olympia, Washington 98504

Re: Killing in Lakewood Adult Family Home by former WSH Resident

Dear Ms. Strange:

I just learned of an all-too-predictable outcome of your Department's practice of placing former Western State Hospital (WSH) residents with violent histories in adult family homes.

A WSH patient with a violent history is reported to have murdered a fellow resident in an adult family home, by striking him in the head. This occurred in Lakewood, in my district. The victim was apparently placed in the facility because of a serious brain condition. The story can be found by the following link: <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article220857985.html>

As you know, I have repeatedly urged the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to end the practice of placing violent offenders from WSH and the Special Commitment Center (SCC) into adult family homes. These homes were never intended to house such individuals and lack the security and staff training to adequately supervise such individuals.

I also have objected to the Department's lack of transparency. I am concerned about its failure to share vital information about such individuals with local law enforcement, adult family home residents and their families, and nearby neighbors.

I urge you to immediately institute a moratorium on placing any more WSH and SCC residents in adult family homes in Lakewood.

In order to properly correct this misguided policy through legislation, I request the following information from the Department about this tragedy:

1. The history of the suspect, including his history of violence, including at WSH and St. Joseph's Hospital (where I understand he resided and assaulted a patient or staff person);

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2. The circumstances that led to the decision to place the suspect in an adult family home;
3. The names of those who were informed of the suspect's apparent violent past prior to his placement. Please include law enforcement, residents of the adult family home, and neighbors near the adult family home;
4. A list of the adult family homes in Lakewood which currently house former WSH and SCC residents; and
5. The steps the Department is considering to prevent such a violent tragedy from occurring in the future.

This information should be released promptly. It is now a criminal matter and an acute public safety issue. Department concerns about patient health care confidentiality no longer apply.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve O'Ban", written in a cursive style.

Senator Steve O'Ban

Cc: Governor Inslee