

Oregon State Hospital, OHSU sign contract for chief psychiatrist, physicians

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Oregon State Hospital patients will receive enhanced psychiatric care, thanks to a new partnership between Oregon Health and Science University and the Oregon Department of Human Services.

The two-year agreement adds a chief psychiatrist and up to six physicians to the state hospital's Salem campus. John Bischof, M.D., former chief medical officer for Cascadia Behavioral Health, has been named chief psychiatrist. The additional physicians, who will be hired and assigned during the next several months, will play an important role in helping meet staffing needs at the state hospital, which has had as many as nine physician vacancies during the past several years.

"This new partnership with OHSU will improve patient care at the state hospital by providing additional highly qualified physicians," said Bob Nikkel, M.S.W., DHS assistant director for addictions and mental health. "Dr. Bischof is a highly respected psychiatrist, and we look forward to the addition of equally talented staff physicians to help meet patient care needs."

"We are excited about this opportunity to play a major role in advancing the standard of care to the patients in the Oregon State Hospital," said Norwood Knight-Richardson, M.D., M.B.A., vice chairman for development, OHSU Department of Psychiatry, and director of the OHSU Division of Public Psychiatry. "This partnership with the state reinforces the commitment Oregon Health and Science University has to providing excellent, state-of-the-art health care to the people of Oregon. We have no illusions about the difficulty of the tasks before us, but the possibility of outstanding outcomes motivates and inspires us."

The agreement was signed by Knight-Richardson, a former member of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, and Maynard Hammer, Oregon State Hospital deputy superintendent, and will be financed by DHS with money already budgeted from vacancy savings.

Under the agreement, the physicians will devote 80 percent of their time to delivering patient care, with the remaining 20 percent spent consulting with community programs and conducting research related to state hospital patients and issues.

The physicians will be recruited by OHSU and will receive faculty appointments. Specific assignments at the state hospital will be subject to DHS approval.