



**TO:** Cascadia staff, clients and community partners  
**FROM:** Wayne Miya, Chair, Cascadia Board of Directors  
**DATE:** For immediate release - April 23, 2008  
**RE:** Cascadia's new Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Directors of nonprofit Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare, Inc., Oregon's largest provider of mental health and addictions treatment services, announces the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer. Derald Walker, Ph.D., previously serving as a Clinical Vice President for Cascadia, was appointed today and assumes the position immediately.

Following the 1976 completion of his Ph.D. in psychology with a specialization in suicidology, Walker began his career in community mental health as a director of a crisis and civil commitment system serving SW Washington State, after serving as a psychologist at Dammasch Hospital's Adolescent Unit.

His administrative career includes serving as a Clinical Director in a Washington Community Mental Health Center (CMHC). Beginning in the late 1980's, he served as the Director of the Office of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for the State of Oregon, and was the principle investigator on several National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) community research grants in partnership with Portland State University. He also served as the NIMH-funded Child and Adolescent Service System Director for the Oregon State Mental Health Division. In this capacity, he provided seed funding for, and served as a charter Board member of, the Oregon Family Support Network Inc., a member of the national Federation of Families.

He established and was State Director of a large, five-year Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Children's Mental Health demonstration program based in Portland.

His managed care experience began as Manager of Behavioral Health Services for Managed Healthcare Northwest/Oregon BlueCross/BlueShield. He continued as the Washington State Director for United Behavioral Health, including overseeing the King County (Seattle) and Clark County (Vancouver) managed Medicaid behavioral health initiatives. Subsequently, he served as an administrator for GreenSpring, and Magellan; and as CEO of Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania, Inc., and ValueOptions of Texas, Inc. There he functioned as a turn-around leader for the nation's largest private specialty behavioral health maintenance company, contracting with federal, state and local entities.

He has extensive familiarity with Oregon's mental health provider system. He led Mount Hood Mental Health, Inc., one of the agencies that now is incorporated into Cascadia; and he has served as the Director of Behavioral Health Services for Multnomah County.

During his career, he has served on numerous local, state, and federal taskforces and gubernatorial appointed commissions.

Walker says, “It is great to be back in Oregon, and I am thrilled to have this chance to serve the people and communities of Oregon by leading Cascadia. I do not have any illusions – I know this is a difficult business in a difficult payer environment; but I am wholly committed to the work that this company does, and Cascadia is a great company.”

Outgoing CEO Leslie Ford served as Cascadia’s Chief Executive Officer for more than six years, and prior to that served for 13 years as the CEO of Network Behavioral Healthcare, Inc., one of Cascadia’s predecessor organizations. Ford was instrumental in forming Cascadia as it became clear that small agencies were seriously disadvantaged; some struggled and others failed. The need to reduce services fragmentation, and to reduce the unnecessary and costly use of acute care drove her vision.

Ford says the time is right for her to leave. She says that it’s time for new energy and new ideas to lead the organization forward. “I’m grateful that we have a new and truly excellent management team in place, and that helps me make this decision. I’ve served Cascadia through several difficult financial times like this one, part of the nature of publicly funded services in Oregon.” Cascadia and other similar providers have struggled to keep up with fluctuating public funding streams, changing contracts, changing reimbursement mechanisms, and increasingly stringent and variable regulations.

“I’m absolutely committed to the work that we’ve done, and the staff and the clients, but it’s the right time for me to leave.” She explains that over the past couple of years, she has steadily strengthened senior management. “We have a strong executive team, all new employees within the past year. The appointment of Chief Financial Officer Chip Burczak was a final important key.” Ford plans to take the summer off to enjoy her husband and teen-aged children before seeking new employment. “I have a lot to offer, and remain dedicated helping people recover from mental illnesses and addictions.”

Cascadia has recently struggled financially as it made major investments in new electronic business and billing systems, including a comprehensive, state of the art electronic medical records system, while continuing to provide client services in an environment of complex and constantly changing reimbursement models. Cascadia, which employs more than 1,000 people, and provides services in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Marion, and Lane Counties, had contacts with more than 20,000 clients in the past year.

Board Chair Wayne Miya notes that a few months ago Dr. Walker was appointed to serve as one of Cascadia’s two Clinical Vice Presidents. He was selected for that role after an extensive external search and an interview process that involved direct service staff, consumers, and management.

Miya said “He and this new senior executive team are the right people to see the company through this latest financial difficulty, and take the company to its next stage of development.”