

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: 11/2/06

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State Hospitalization Expert Visits Oregon

Dr. John Talbott, the one-time head of the American Psychiatric Association who is an internationally recognized expert on providing mental health care, led an animated discussion Wednesday after presenting on *State Hospitals, Past Present Future* to key leaders, said Leslie Ford, president and CEO of Cascadia.

Cascadia, the largest provider of outpatient care in the state, was one of the co-sponsors of the event. Attendees included Bob Nikkel, who heads the state's Addictions and Mental Health Division, Karl Brimmer, Multnomah County's Mental Health and Addictions director, Mary Claire Buckley, Psychiatric Security Review Board executive director, and more than 40 administrators and clinicians from Cascadia, Oregon Department of Human Services, Multnomah County, Providence, OHSU, other key service providers, and consumers.

Talbott reviewed the history of psychiatric hospitals as "monolithic custodial institutions," the push toward deinstitutionalization, and national trends toward bringing back increased hospital services. He noted 23 states now have plans for increasing hospital services, including 14 that had vowed to cut down the service. He called this "a radical, 180 degree shift." He spoke of "unprecedented backup for admissions, worse than a decade ago."

Talbott criticized too many hospital beds being designated for forensic patients, political concerns overshadowing clinical issues, and hospital being seen as a "last resort" where people received "care and confinement" rather than treatment. Talbott had reviewed a draft version of the plan for Oregon state hospitals and raised several concerns.

Nikkel responded by pointing to recent achievements, such as a collaborative agreement with OHSU to improve medical staffing. He spoke of Oregon's "fairly significant challenges," including that 60 to 80 percent of forensic patients have methamphetamine problems."

The free-ranging discussion touched on issues of system fragmentation, taxpayer resistance to funding treatment, past problems with the state hospital,

Ford noted that, "These discussions are vital as we face the many challenges in providing a broad-ranging, effective treatment for our most vulnerable citizens."

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