

**SWEET HOME POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**  
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	<b>This Month</b>	<b>Last Month</b>	<b>Last Year</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>	
	09/30/2021	08/31/2021	09/30/2020	09/30/2021	<b>5 Year</b>
<b>Call Volume</b>	705	840	740	6825	6949
<b>CAD Calls</b>	1277	1437	1499	12969	13112
<b>ONIBR Person Crimes</b>	15	12	15	140	119
<b>ONIBR Person Crimes Cleared</b>	9	5	11	102	84
<b>ONIBR Property Crimes</b>	37	68	44	408	419
<b>ONIBR Property Crimes Cleared</b>	9	13	16	99	137

### **Trends:**

The Sweet Home Police Department has seen a massive increase in calls related to mental health since 2019, while the access to mental healthcare appears to have been declining for a couple.

With this in mind, various partners in east Linn County met with Linn County Mental Health officials last week to discuss ways to increase mental health services in east county. The information provided painted a grim picture for mental health assistance in the entire State, let alone east Linn County.

Linn County Mental Health officials relayed to us that there is a significant bottle neck in necessary services at the State level. Based on the information that we received, the cause for this is two-fold. First, it is a staffing issue. Staffing across the state is stretched thin in nearly all fields, including mental health providers. During two recent episodes, the Oregon National Guard has been called in to assist with staffing at the Oregon State Hospital. This shortage isn't only at the State level. The Linn County Health Department has upwards of 16 open, unfilled positions. One of the primary goals of this meeting was to attempt to acquire more crisis intervention services to our area. Funding for this type of position is available, however, willing, and qualified applicants are not.

The second reason for the bottle neck at the State level is the lack of available mental healthcare beds. The Oregon State Hospital is not taking patients, at least not at the level that is needed. Several articles have been published on this topic that will be linked to below. According to a story in the Salem Reporter, 71 percent of the patients at the State Hospital are "aid-and-assist" patients. The State Hospital is required to prepare criminal defendants who have mental illness to "aid and assist" in their defense. For the past two decades, a court order has given priority to "aid-and-assist" patients. While the rule was relaxed in response to COVID-19, a subsequent appellate court ruling called for a permanent solution to ensure people are receiving prompt care at the State Hospital. This has limited civil commitments and leaves those sentenced to treatment at the State Hospital waiting in local jails without treatment.

Since the beginning of 2021, there have been no transports to the State Hospital from any jurisdiction in Oregon for defendants found guilty except for insanity. In the OPB report, the legal director of Disability Rights Oregon notes that the hospital cannot maintain its current staffing, much less expand its capacity and that the problems at the hospital have been building for years. Among the reasons is there are not enough community-based treatment options to intervene earlier.

What does this mean locally for us? There are 11 residential beds designated for mental health treatment shared between Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. Simply put, it isn't nearly enough. We need staffing, but we really need more beds locally and at the State Hospital

Despite these challenges, we do have some hope for improvement. Linn County Mental Health continues to meet with our department regularly and makes an outreach worker available as needed to reach specific individuals. A judge found the State Hospital in contempt of court for failing to admit people with significant mental illnesses who need long-term treatment. New legislation passed this year may provide funding to the hospital and outside programs, including creation and support for crisis response teams, but hiring has been slow. Linn County Mental Health ensures us that east Linn County is the top priority for any expansion.

Locally, Country Counseling and Exodus Recovery have added capacity with the addition of a drug and alcohol counselor and a psychologist, who specializes in trauma and psychosis; and they have openings in their schedules. In a Monday quality assurance meeting, they reported they are planning to remodel their facility, located at 1235 Main St.

We continue to encourage folks with mental health issues to seek help from professionals, and we have seen some successes, but we still have a long way to go.

Article links:

<https://www.salemreporter.com/posts/5175/staffers-at-oregon-state-hospital-endure-violence-long-hours-despite-promises-of-improvements>

<https://www.opb.org/article/2021/10/12/judge-finds-oregon-state-hospital-in-contempt-of-court/>