



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Columbia River Mental Health Announces New CEO and Board Chair  
Daniel Smith to lead agency for providing stable, long-term care for Clark County**

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Columbia River Mental Health Services (CRMHS) announced the appointment of Daniel Smith, MSW, as the organization's new Chief Executive Officer. The organization also announced Lisa Nisenfeld as its new board president, as CRMHS charts a new path forward for providing long-term vital services for the thousands of people who rely on CRMHS. Smith officially began his role on September 9, 2025, and is working closely with a new board, Chief Operations Officer Kelly Ferguson, Chief Clinical Officer Lisa Aarseth, the Executive Leadership team and staff to grow its legacy of providing comprehensive Adult, Child, and Family Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder services in Clark County.

"Columbia River has been supporting people for over 75 years in and around Clark County and we are excited to continue to provide an array of services for people in our community for another 75 years. Our organization is committed to evolving in order to meet the unmet needs of everyone who walks into our building or find themselves in need of support" Smith noted. CRMHS is fully open at their Main Clinic on Fourth Plain Boulevard for anyone needing behavioral health services for adults, youth and families.

Smith has been a dedicated leader in the behavioral health community for many years, serving in a variety of roles that reflect both his experience and commitment to develop strong and effective teams, empowering others, collaborating with partners and overseeing complex initiatives that lead to systemic changes that enhance opportunities for everyone to live the life they desire. Nisenfeld most recently retired as president of Working Designs NW, a consulting firm focused on workforce development. Prior to that she served as director of the Oregon Employment Department, president of the Columbia River Economic Development Council and executive director of the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council. Smith stated, Lisa is "is a tremendously dedicated public servant who strives to make her community better in each endeavor she pursues.

"We have an organization brimming with passionate, skilled, and dedicated staff who show up every day to support people in need. They are the heart and soul of our organization and our mission. Together they make the difference in people's lives and we are looking forward to impacting more lives in a positive way." While acknowledging recent challenges, he expressed confidence in the future: "The people who work here are simply incredible. As we move forward and turn the page, I know our team of professionals will continue to grow, evolve, and strengthen this agency in very positive ways in the months and years to come."

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“Daniel has been a passionate, committed, and unwavering partner to NAMI and to many other organizations throughout the region. We are thrilled that he will now bring his leadership and expertise to Columbia River Mental Health. His appointment ensures the agency’s strength and stability for the long term,” said Kim Schneiderman, Executive Director of NAMI.

This new leadership team ushers in a new chapter for CRMHS, after the organization worked to overcome challenges throughout the course of the year. The organization was grateful to receive a \$1.6 million emergency funding grant from the Cowlitz Indian Tribe in the Spring of 2025 to help continue its operations, and shortly thereafter entered formal negotiations aimed at preserving the life-saving services CRMHS provides to people throughout Southwest Washington. The Cowlitz Indian Tribe and CRMHS are continuing negotiations to transition the NorthStar Opioid Program to the Tribe’s stewardship. Importantly, as these negotiations unfold, existing NorthStar clients will continue to be served without interruption, ensuring that vital treatment and recovery services remain available in the community.

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