

# W.Va. Faces Mental Health Care Crisis

Charleston, W.Va. (AP) --- West Virginia hospitals spend more on patients suffering from psychosis than on any other diagnosis and almost doubled their mental health spending over four years.

(full article; ( [http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/MENTAL\\_HEALTH?SITE=WVHUN&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/MENTAL_HEALTH?SITE=WVHUN&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT) ) beginning continues...) The increased spending, shortage of beds at state-run psychiatric hospitals and the fifth-highest suicide rate in the country indicate a mental health crisis in West Virginia, according to an investigation by the Sunday Gazette-Mail of Charleston.

Mental health care problems are difficult to solve because of the stigma surrounding mental illness, said Eugenie Taylor, acting commissioner at the state Bureau of Health and Health Facilities.

"If this was any other disease, there would be a groundswell of support for change," she said.

State hospitals in 2003 spent \$101 million treating psychosis, up from \$52 million four years earlier, according to the state Health Care Authority.

The state Supreme Court reports that the number of "mental hygiene petitions" - which are requested by police, social workers and family members to commit people to mental hospitals - has increased by 45 percent between 1999 and 2003 ... (full article ( [http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/MENTAL\\_HEALTH?SITE=WVHUN&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/M/MENTAL_HEALTH?SITE=WVHUN&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT) ) )