

MARION COUNTY GRAND JURY ISSUES FINDINGS FOR OREGON STATE HOSPITAL INQUIRY (PHOTO)

News Release from **Marion Co. Dist. Attorney's Office**

Posted on FlashAlert: September 30th, 2026 10:45 AM

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Salem, OR – September 30, 2026 – In March of this year, Marion County District Attorney Paige Clarkson convened a grand jury inquiry into the conditions and management of Oregon State Hospital located in Salem, Oregon (see below for original release). This inquiry is authorized pursuant to Oregon Revised Statute 132.440.

At the time, District Attorney Clarkson stated: “I have become increasingly concerned that the Oregon State Hospital cannot meet the challenges of the moment: appropriately responding to the growing need for intensive, hospital level of care for individuals whose diagnoses require civil commitment, restoration services, or secure levels of treatment for the safety of themselves and the public. We have an obligation to inquire into what is being done with an eye toward what more is needed.”

Today, the grand jury released its findings, substantiating the need for the inquiry and highlighting capacity issues and conflicts of purpose within the institution.

During the approximately six-month inquiry, the grand jury: held 13 sessions where they inquired into the conditions and management of the Oregon State Hospital, Salem campus; heard over 47 hours of testimony from approximately 40 witnesses, which included current and former OSH employees, medical providers, OSH management, union representatives, forensic evaluators, a former patient, a patient’s mother, witnesses from Marion County Sheriff’s Office, a Circuit Court judge, community partners, and other witnesses. The grand jury toured the grounds of the OSH Salem campus.

The inquiry revealed several issues highlighting that OSH lacks sufficient bed capacity to simultaneously meet the needs of Oregonians in need of hospitalization at OSH for aid and assist restoration, commitment after being adjudicated guilty except for insanity, or in need of commitment under Oregon's civil commitment laws.

The grand jury made 19 findings many relating to the patient’s path through the system, such as during admission and their time as a patient, as well as broader concerns at the

hospital including patient experience, safety, staffing and leadership. Additional findings address the population at OSH, an overall conflict of purpose, the use of seclusion, and the Grand Jury's experience during the facility tour.

District Attorney Clarkson stated:

"While this inquiry and the resulting report could never encompass all the multifaceted issues faced by the Oregon State Hospital, it serves as confirmation that the hospital continues to fall short in its crucial obligation to our communities and our most vulnerable Oregonians. Our communities should expect better from the state's behavioral health system and that must start with increased capacity at all levels, improved staff safety, an up-stream focus on civil commitment rather than reliance on the criminal justice system, and—perhaps most important of all—dependable leadership that creates a culture where this is all possible."

DA Clarkson continued, "I would like to thank the dedicated Marion County grand jurors, who were chosen from our community by the court, and who devoted significant time and thoughtful consideration to these complex issues. This was not an easy task, but I share in the hope that their effort will be illustrative to our state leaders and lawmakers as they shape policy to keep all Oregonians safe and healthy."

The Marion County Grand Jury's 2026 report regarding the Oregon State Hospital can be accessed [here](#).

Original News Release:

News Release from Marion Co. Dist. Attorney's Office

Posted on FlashAlert: March 13, 2026 11:55 AM

Today, Marion County District Attorney Paige Clarkson convened a grand jury to inquire into the conditions and management of the Oregon State Hospital located in Salem, Marion County, Oregon. This inquiry is required under Oregon Revised Statute 132.440. The Marion County District Attorney's Office conducted a similar inquiry into the MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility in Woodburn last year (final report can be found [here](#)).

"Our state's most crucial facility serving those with mental illness is housed right here in the heart of Salem. The Oregon State Hospital is statutorily responsible for the majority of

our state's criminal justice response to the behavioral health crisis plaguing our communities" stated District Attorney Clarkson. She continued, "Over the last several years, I have become increasingly concerned that the Oregon State Hospital cannot meet the challenge of the moment: appropriately responding to the growing need for intensive, hospital level of care for individuals whose diagnoses require civil commitment, restoration services, or secure levels of treatment for the safety of themselves and the public. We have an obligation to inquire into what is being done with an eye toward what more is needed."

District Attorney Clarkson is convening this grand jury to inquire into the current operations, capacity challenges, and public safety implications associated with the Oregon State Hospital. The work of the grand jury is expected to take several months and will issue a public report upon completion of their work.

Marion County Senior Deputy District Attorney David Wilson, and Deputy District Attorney Evelyn Centeno will oversee the proceedings. To support the anticipated volume of work, Washington County Deputy District Attorney Joel Peterson will also assist as a specially deputized Marion County DDA. Senior DDA Wilson has significant experience with institution related cases and oversees Oregon State Hospital prosecutions within the Marion County District Attorney's Office. DDA Centeno serves as Marion County's behavioral health prosecutor and has extensive experience working with behavioral health facilities statewide. DDA Peterson oversees a similar caseload in Washington County and is also a subject matter expert on behavioral health criminal justice matters.

Consistent with all matters that come before a grand jury, these proceedings are confidential.

No further information will be released prior to the grand jury's final report. The Marion County District Attorney's Office anticipates the report will be completed by the end of the year and will be publicly released at that time.

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