

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1612

As Reported by House Committee On:
Juvenile Justice & Family Law

Title: An act relating to notification to parents of the mental health treatment options for minors available under chapter 71.34 RCW.

Brief Description: Requiring notification to parents of the mental health treatment options for their minor child.

Sponsors: Representatives Hinkle, Dickerson, Delvin, Carrell, Pettigrew, Upthegrove, Eickmeyer, Edwards and Kessler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Juvenile Justice & Family Law: 2/11/03, 2/20/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires notification to parents of the options available for the mental health treatment of minors.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE & FAMILY LAW

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Dickerson, Chair; Pettigrew, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Eickmeyer, Hinkle and Upthegrove.

Staff: Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

Background:

Under traditional common law, parents have authority to consent to various forms of treatment for their children. In Washington, the common law parental authority has been modified by statute to authorize the minor child to have the authority to consent to treatment in some situations. The common law has also been modified by statute to provide for specific procedures which parents and providers must follow in certain situations.

Parents seeking mental health treatment for their minor children in Washington State are not provided with any uniform materials informing them of the treatment options available, or procedures to follow, to provide mental health treatment for their children.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is required to produce, and make available, a written document containing information explaining the statutorily available options for mental health treatment of a minor and the procedures to follow to utilize the treatment options.

If a parent seeks to have his or her child treated at a mental health evaluation and treatment facility, the facility must provide written and verbal notice to the parents of the statutorily available options for mental health treatment of a minor and the procedures to follow to utilize the treatment options.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Juvenile Justice & Family Law Committee has repeatedly heard that there was so much information that was not being given to the parents. This bill doesn't change any authority. It only requires notification. The DSHS has begun the process of putting together this information and developing a marketing strategy to inform parents. Juvenile courts also need to get this information. There is a lot of confusion over what is available to parents.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Hinkle, prime sponsor; Karl Brimner, the Department of Social and Health Services; and Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society of Washington.