

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1915

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to employment services in mental health programs.

Brief Description: Providing employment services in mental health programs.

Sponsor(s): By House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives R. King, Prentice, Morris, Prince, Nealey, Ogden and Chandler).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, March 6, 1991, DPS;
Passed House, March 19, 1991, 98-0;
Passed Legislature, 98-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1915 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beck; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

Staff: Dawn Jones (786-7077).

Background: Vocational services have proven to be an important tool in the treatment of the mentally ill. Historically, neither the state nor the counties have been under any specific obligation to provide vocational services to this population. Realizing its importance, many counties already provide these services.

There is a need to upgrade and legitimize the status of vocational services in regard to the mentally ill.

Summary of Bill: In providing treatment for the county's mentally ill, the County Mental Health program will provide employment services, which may include supported employment, transitional work, placement in competitive employment, and other work related services.

Other sources of funding, such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, may be utilized to maximize federal funding and provide for integration of services.

The county program shall provide employment services which may include supported employment, transitional work, placement in competitive employment, and other work related services, that result in mentally ill persons becoming engaged in meaningful and gainful full or part-time work.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: We recognize the need to increase these kinds of services to enable mentally ill persons to receive gainful employment. These programs do exist to some extent in most counties.

All of us derive a large measure of our self esteem from the work we do and the contribution we make toward society. Mentally ill persons are prevented from having their self esteem boosted in this fashion.

The mental health community has always recognized the need to focus program and rehabilitative efforts towards work opportunities. While there has been a number of demonstration programs around the state supporting the reliability of this goal, there are still a number of barriers that remain. This bill will place a greater emphasis upon employment services as part of the treatment services for mentally ill persons.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Jud Cunningham, Washington Community Mental Health Council; Nick Codd, Vocational Services Division and Washington Community Mental Health Council; Pat Thibaudeau, Washington Community Mental Health Council; and Jeanne Munro, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.