

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5671

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE,
MARCH 5, 1991

Brief Description: Expanding community mental health programs to include employment services.

SPONSORS: Senators Niemi, West, L. Smith and Sutherland.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5671 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Niemi, and Wojahn.

Staff: Suzanne Brown (786-7483)

Hearing Dates: February 26, 1991; March 5, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Psychiatrically disabled persons view themselves as increasingly capable of functioning as contributing members of society when they are employed. Successful mental health programs with vocational components have been in Washington for many years.

RCW 71.24 currently requires state and local mental health authorities to provide day treatment for mentally ill persons. These services include training in basic living and social skills, supported work and vocational rehabilitation.

The Mental Health Division, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and community mental health programs identify the need for collaboration to expand locally based supported employment opportunities for mentally ill persons.

SUMMARY:

Existing Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) requirements regarding community mental health programs under Chapter 71.24 RCW are expanded to include employment services. Employment services include supported employment, transitional work, placement in competitive employment, and other work-related services resulting in meaningful and gainful full or part-time work for mentally ill persons. The Department of Social and Health Services may use a variety of funding sources, including Division of Vocational Rehabilitation funds, to maximize federal funding and service integration.

The existing duties of county authorities under Chapter 71.24 RCW are expanded to include employment services.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

Existing regional support networks' duties are expanded to include employment services.

The duties of county authorities are not expanded.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 14, 1991

TESTIMONY FOR:

The emphasis on service integration and locally based services clarifies the role of both DSHS and regional support networks in providing employment opportunities for mentally ill individuals.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Funding enhancements are recommended to improve employment services for mentally ill individuals.

TESTIFIED: Helen Schwedenberg, Washington Community Mental Health Council and Community Psychiatric Clinic (pro); Jeanne Duncan, South Sound Advocates for Disabled Citizens (pro); Cheryl Strange, Thurston/Mason Community Mental Health (pro); Joanne Asaba, King County Mental Health Board (pro); Jack Bilsborough, Advocates for the Mentally Ill of Washington (pro); Patricia De Boer, Thurston/ Mason Advocates for the Mentally Ill (pro); Ken Taylor, Evergreen Counseling (pro); Kay Day, North Sound Regional Support Network Advisory Board (pro); Kathleen Rhoads, Capital Clubhouse (pro); Bernie Buchheitz, Advocates for the Mentally Ill of Washington State (pro); Ross Kane, North Sound Regional Support Network; Nancy Caldwell, Greater Columbia Regional Support Network