

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2663

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the distribution of atypical antipsychotic medications to underserved populations.

Brief Description: Creating a pilot program to provide atypical antipsychotic medications to underserved populations.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Alexander, Schual-Berke, Parlette, Cody, Reardon, Ericksen, Morris, Tokuda, Benson, Doumit, Pflug, Kessler, Ruderman, Rockefeller, Edmonds, Santos, O'Brien, Hurst and Esser).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 2/1/00, 2/4/00 [DPS];
Appropriations: 2/7/00 [DP2S(w/o sub HC)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/10/00, 96-1.
Senate Amended.
Passed Senate: 3/3/00, 48-0.
House Concurred.
Passed House: 3/7/00, 96-2.
Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- The Department of Social and Health Services must establish a pilot program to distribute atypical antipsychotic medications to underserved populations through contacts with regional support networks.
- The department must report to the Legislature on the results of the program by December 1, 2001.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Parlette, Republican Co-Chair; Pflug, Republican Vice Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Alexander; Campbell; Conway; Edmonds; Edwards; Mulliken; Pennington and Ruderman.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Health Care. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Huff, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Barlean, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; D. Schmidt, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander; Benson; Clements; Cody; Crouse; Gombosky; Grant; Kagi; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McIntire; McMorris; Mulliken; Parlette; Regala; Rockefeller; Ruderman; Sullivan; Sump; Tokuda and Wensman.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Boldt.

Staff: Amy Hanson (786-7118).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health provides funding to regional support networks, formed by counties or groups of counties, for offering mental health services in the community. The regional support networks contract with community mental health centers and other mental health providers, and currently serve some 105,000 outpatients in the community.

Approximately 30 percent of persons who suffer serious mental illness do not qualify for Medicaid assistance benefits, nor do they have resources to needed antipsychotic medications, especially the newer atypical antipsychotic medications. Recent experience shows that conventional antipsychotic medications are less effective and have serious and irreversible side effects. The newer atypical antipsychotic medications suggest early, drastic reductions in total mental health treatment costs, without the same side effects as other psychotic medications.

Summary of Bill:

There is a declaration of legislative intent to promote access to atypical antipsychotic medications by those unable to access them and who present risks of harm to themselves and to the community.

To the extent funds are available, the Department of Social and Health Services is directed to establish a program to promote access to atypical antipsychotic medications to persons with schizophrenia or other psychiatric or neurological condition, whose income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and who is not covered by insurance or other benefit.

Contracts must be awarded to contractors who have a cost effect distribution mechanism, target children and adults transitioning from corrections facilities or receiving mental health services under the state mental health treatment laws, and who propose a comprehensive treatment program designed to achieve an improved mental health status and stable living situation.

Participating pharmaceutical companies must increase access to their products for the targeted population through intensive outreach to their respective indigent drug programs

The Washington Institute for Public Policy is directed to conduct an evaluation of the program to determine patient outcomes, access to atypical antipsychotic medications, and the uniformity of prescriptions among the population, and report to the legislature by June 30, 2002.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of the session in which this bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funding is included in the omnibus appropriations act.

Testimony For: (Health Care) There is a need to serve the mentally ill population which does not qualify for state Medicaid services and therefore does not have access to newer atypical antipsychotic medications. Conventional medications are less effective and have serious, possible irreversible side effects.

(Appropriations) This is a very important issue for the handling of the state's mental health population. This is a program designed to help the very difficult to serve, non-Medicaid eligible, seriously mentally ill population. Access to this medication will help create opportunities for this group.

Testimony Against: (Health Care) Antipsychotic medications are inherently dangerous, including the newer atypical drugs which can cause serious harm to patients.

(Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Health Care) (In support) Representative Alexander, prime sponsor; Representative Schual-Berke, secondary sponsor; Tom Richardson and Charles Albertson, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Washington; and Melanie Stewart, Washington State District and Municipal Court Judges.

(Concerns) Richard Warner, CCHR; Pat Terry, Mental Health Division, Department of Social and Health Services; and Eleanor Owen, Washington Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

(Appropriations) Representative Alexander, prime co-sponsor; and Brad Boswell, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Washington.