

Children & Family Services

HB 1252

Brief Description: *Exempting faith-based chemical dependency treatment programs from state regulation.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Boldt, Mulliken, Schindler and Lambert.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Chemical dependency treatment programs operated by religious organizations are exempted from licensing by the Department of Health (DOH) and from regulation by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).*
- *These programs are prohibited from serving minors, offering medical care, medical detoxification, or medical withdrawal services.*
- *State or federal benefits may not be denied to a person because the person is participating in a faith-based residential chemical dependency treatment program.*

Hearing Date: *2/5/01*

Staff: *Deborah Frazier (786-7152).*

Background:

Residential and outpatient chemical dependency treatment programs may choose to be regulated by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Certification of programs is voluntary.

Residential chemical dependency treatment programs must meet licensing requirements

established by the Department of Health (DOH).

State and federal treatment funding currently is limited to programs certified by DASA. To be certified, programs that include a religious component must make participation in that aspect of the program voluntary.

Summary of Bill:

A chemical dependency treatment program that does not treat minors, which is operated by a religious organization, is exempted from licensing by the DOH and from regulation by the DASA. Religious organization is defined. The DSHS is instructed to develop a simple registration process for such programs.

These programs are prohibited from offering medical care, medical detoxification, or medical withdrawal services. The programs are required to conspicuously display a statement indicating the exemption from licensing and regulation. A person entering such a program is required to sign a declaration stating that she or he understands the nature of the services offered by the program.

The DSHS may revoke the exemption from licensing and regulation if the organization violates the provisions of the bill, or rules adopted under the authority of the bill. The authority of public health officials and fire prevention officials to inspect facilities used by these programs is not affected.

State or federal benefits may not be denied to a person because the person is participating in a faith-based residential chemical dependency treatment program. These programs may not compete against licensed programs for direct federal or state treatment funding.

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

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on January 30, 2001.*