

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5986

As Passed House - Amended:

April 12, 2001

Title: An act relating to regulation of county or local government-owned psychiatric facilities.

Brief Description: Regulating county or local government-owned psychiatric facilities.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Kastama, Long, Regala and Hargrove).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 3/29/01 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/12/01, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- A county or municipal hospital, or public hospital district, establishing an institution serving mentally ill or chemically dependent persons must be licensed by the Department of Health.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Campbell, Republican Co-Chair; Cody, Democratic Co-Chair; Schual-Berke, Democratic Vice Chair; Skinner, Republican Vice Chair; Alexander, Ballasiotes, Conway, Darneille, Edmonds, Edwards, Marine, McMorris, Pennington and Ruderman.

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background:

In the summer of 2000, Puget Sound Hospital in Pierce County filed bankruptcy. The Pierce County Regional Support Network (PCRSN) purchased the Puget Sound Hospital facility. The PCRSN intends to convert the facility from a fully-licensed acute care

hospital into a mental health and chemical dependency evaluation and treatment facility.

Current law requires that a person, association, or corporation establishing an institution, including a hospital or sanitarium, which cares for patients with mental illness or chemical dependency be licensed by the Department of Health. The operation of an unlicensed institution is a misdemeanor.

There is no specific licensing requirement for a public entity, such as a county or municipal hospital, or public hospital district, establishing an institution for serving patients with mental illness or chemical dependency.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A county or municipal hospital, including a public hospital district, establishing an institution serving mentally ill or chemically dependent persons must be licensed by the Department of Health.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: The law needs to be clarified to specifically include public entities in the licensing requirement for establishing hospitals and institutions serving the mentally ill.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: George Walk, Pierce County; Jean Wessman, Washington Association of Counties; Jack Morris, Department of Social and Health Services; and Gary Bennett, Department of Health.