

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5986

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 27, 2001

Title: An act relating to public psychiatric facilities.

Brief Description: Clarifying licensing for public psychiatric facilities.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Kastama, Long, Regala and Hargrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/26/01, 2/27/01 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5986 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa, Fraser and Winsley.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Deccio.

Staff: Joan K. Mell (786-7447)

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. PCRSN intends to convert the facility from a fully-licensed acute care hospital into a mental health and chemical dependency evaluation and treatment facility. Surgical and non-behavioral health services are not provided at the facility.

Current statutory provisions that govern licensing are divided into categories that do not fit the current legal and operational status of the new facility. Psychiatric hospitals are governed under statutory provisions that refer to "private establishments." The new facility is publicly owned by the county and arguably would not withstand legal challenges to its state licensing credentials.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The private establishments provisions that permit Department of Health regulation of psychiatric hospitals is amended to include county or municipal owned facilities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The language is clarified to specifically address the issue of Puget Sound Hospital and another municipally owned psychiatric hospital, but avoid the issue of state-owned psychiatric facilities. The language change is technical.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This request is for a technical bill to enable Pierce County to continue to operate needed psychiatric beds in Tacoma. The Department of Health supports this clarifying bill, which provides for the appropriate regulation of these hospitals. The Department of Social and Health Services supports this legislation which provides services for people close to home.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Andrea Stephensen, Empower Alliance (pro); Michael Shaw, Pierce County (pro); Gary Bennett, DOH (pro); Richard Onizuko, MHD-DSHS (pro).