

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6363

As of January 25, 2002

Title: An act relating to unprofessional conduct of chemical dependency professionals and counselors.

Brief Description: Making it unprofessional conduct for a counselor or chemical dependency professional to give a treatment recommendation without a personal meeting with the patient.

Sponsors: Senators Winsley, Prentice, Thibaudeau and Fairley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/28/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Tanya Karwaki (786-7447)

Background: Counselors and chemical dependency professionals make treatment recommendations regarding their clients. Currently, state law does not require counselors to meet face-to-face with their clients prior to making such recommendations. A meeting is required by the administrative rules of the Department of Social and Health Services for chemical dependency professionals conducting a chemical dependency assessment or counseling a client. Nonetheless, there is concern that treatment recommendations are being made without the health professional and client personally meeting.

The Uniform Disciplinary Act applies to counselors and chemical dependency professionals. Unprofessional conduct includes the violation of any state or federal statute or rule regulating the profession.

Summary of Bill: A treatment recommendation by a counselor registered under RCW 18.19 or a chemical dependency professional certified under RCW 18.205 constitutes unprofessional conduct under the Uniform Disciplinary Act unless the counselor or chemical dependency professional has personally met with the person who is the subject of the recommendation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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