

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2114

As Passed House:

March 14, 2003

Title: An act relating to the funding of family preservation and intervention services.

Brief Description: Establishing a family preservation and intervention services legislative task force.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi and Dickerson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 3/3/03, 3/5/03 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/14/03, 65-29.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Establishes a Family Preservation and Intervention Services Legislative Task Force.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Dickerson, Miloscia and Pettigrew.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Boldt, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey and Shabro.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

The Children's Administration (CA) in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) currently administers, through contracts, the following family preservation and intervention programs in support of families in the state:

- Alternative Response System (ARS) provides services to low-risk families referred to Child Protective Services (CPS). Services help families develop community support systems to keep children safe and families intact without intrusive CPS intervention. ARS serves families whose CPS referrals are determined to be low risk or moderately low risk at intake or after investigation. Priority is given to families who have one or more of the risk factors that research has shown to best predict the likelihood of re-referral.
- Continuum of Care (COC) provides early intervention services to low-risk families. Services are designed to be appropriate, accessible, and sensitive to the population served. COC involves local communities, schools, private entities, and state agencies in assessment and planning of services.
- Family Preservation Services (FPS) are available to families whose children face substantial likelihood of being placed outside of the home or to reunify children with their families from out-of-home care. FPS are available to families within 48 hours of referral and are offered for a maximum of six months. FPS are designed to support families by strengthening their relationships with a variety of community resources.
- Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) are available to families whose children the DSHS believes are at imminent risk of foster care placement. IFPS are voluntary services that provide up to 20 hours of in-home therapist time each week, for about a 40-day period of time. Services are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Interventions are focused on improving the ability of the family to overcome a crisis situation and to remain together safely.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

A Family Preservation and Intervention Services Legislative Task Force (Task Force) is established. The Task Force is required to establish a plan for implementing integration of funding for family preservation and intervention services in the state.

The membership of the Task Force must include the following: individuals with expertise in research on effective family preservation and intervention services; individuals with expertise in community-based provision of family preservation and intervention services; current or former recipients of family preservation and intervention services; representatives of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP); and representatives of the DSHS, including regional office representatives. The Task Force must consist of 15 members as follows: 11 members appointed by the Secretary of the DSHS; and four members of the Legislature. Non-legislative members of the Task Force, except those representing an employer or organization, are entitled to reimbursement to be paid jointly by the Senate and the House of Representatives. Staff support for the Task Force must be provided by the House Office of Program Research and Senate Committee Services.

The Task Force must, at a minimum:

- Propose a decisionmaking structure for the distribution of funds appropriated for family preservation and intervention services, which emphasizes community involvement and takes into account regional differences;
- Clearly define a request for proposal process for the distribution of funds appropriated for family preservation and intervention services, including a proposal for a system of rating proposals;
- Propose a formula for the equitable, statewide distribution of funds appropriated for family preservation and intervention services;
- Define populations to be served with funds appropriated for family preservation and intervention services, which must include families at risk of further involvement with CPS and families whose children are at risk of being placed outside the home or who have already been placed outside the home;
- Identify services eligible for funds appropriated for family preservation and intervention services; and
- Determine criteria that programs must meet in order to qualify for funds appropriated for family preservation and intervention services, including, at a minimum, identification of: clear, measurable outcomes; research that may be applicable; anticipated cost-effectiveness; broad community involvement, support, and partnerships; and provision of data related to program outcomes.

The Task Force is required to report to the Governor and the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature on the results of its work no later than December 1, 2003, and expires January 1, 2004.

The Legislature intends that the DSHS implement the results of the work of the Task Force in the 2005-2007 biennium.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support) This bill integrates services and eliminates categories, and thereby will enable better responses to the needs of families. The focus is on providing services that are research-based. This step will get a conversation going about how we can design a better service delivery system in the state.

(With concerns) Research is not definitive. Language should be changed to require that research guide program activities. The DSHS should be required to conduct program evaluations. Language should also be added to prevent litigation. The membership of

the Panel should include parents. Past programs have been based on what professionals think families need. There should be a partnership between families and professionals. An important element of services for families is parents working with other parents. This bill takes bold steps in bringing scientific rigor to this area, which is a significant improvement. IFPS is research-based, and must be protected. If only one panel is established, it will be impossible to find members from this state who would not have a conflict of interest. Multiple panels, based on geographic or programmatic distinctions, would solve this problem. A request for proposal would take months, creating a lag between the current system of funding and the new system of funding. The appropriation does not accurately reflect current funding levels for ARS, FPS, IFPS, and COC. The target population to be served, along with priorities, should be specified. This is a step in the right direction, balancing research rigor and community resources. There should be a method for regional input. A process other than a request for proposal may bring about more involvement. Additional funds could be included, such as federal funding. Foster care funding could be capitated, allowing for reinvestments in family preservation programs. It should be specified that the request for proposal is directed to community-based organizations. The community-based organizations should be required to demonstrate collaboration with others in the community. It must be clear that the decisionmaking authority rests with the Panel. This bill represents true fiscal conservatism. The phrase "equitable distribution" should be further defined.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Kagi, prime sponsor.

(With concerns) LaVerne Lamoureux, Department of Social and Health Services; Patty King and Marge Critchlow, A Common Voice; Charlotte Booth, Institute for Family Development; Larry Pederson, citizen; Cathy Garland, Children's Home Society of Washington; and Seth Dawson, Deaconess Children's Services.