

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6684

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Judiciary, February 6, 2004

Title: An act relating to standardizing chemical dependency assessment protocols.

Brief Description: Convening a work group to develop chemical dependency assessment protocols.

Sponsors: Senators Kline, McCaslin, Esser, Kohl-Welles and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 2/4/04, 2/6/04 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6684 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Esser, Vice Chair; Brandland, Haugen, Johnson, Kline and Roach.

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: When a court orders a person to have a chemical dependency assessment, the chemical dependency professional responsible for interviewing the person and making a treatment recommendation to the court will often have to reach his or her conclusions without the benefit of the police report from the case or the person's criminal history. Historically, assessments have been based almost solely on the self-report of the defendants, and there is concern that substance abuse problems are often minimized or denied. Proponents of this bill believe that availability of collateral information will produce more accurate assessments and more effective court-ordered treatment.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The director of the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse of the Department of Social and Health Services must convene a work group to develop written protocols for the production of accurate chemical dependency assessments and treatment plans. The work group determines the process by which the information is made available to chemical dependency professionals and probation assessment officers. The members of the work group are specified and they serve without compensation. By November 1, 2004, the work group must submit written protocols to the Legislature and the Governor.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute specifies that a representative from the association of alcohol and addiction programs and a representative from the Washington state Association of Independent Outpatient Programs are included in the work group tasked with developing protocols for the production of chemical dependency assessments and treatment plans.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill will force all parties to sit down and work through how this necessary collateral information will be made available. Traditionally, chemical dependency assessment professionals have not been able to obtain this background information.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Doug Allen, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse of DSHS; Julie Mitchell, Association of Addiction Programs, WA State Association of Independent Outpatient Providers.