

5946-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Kastama and Kohl-Welles)

Brief Description: Creating an office of mental health ombudsman.

**SB 5946-S - DIGEST**

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Finds that in order to comply with the community mental health services act, chapter 71.24 RCW, and the medicaid managed care mental health waiver, and to effectively assist persons with mental illness and consumers of mental health services in the assertion of their civil and human rights, and to improve the quality of services available and promote the rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration of these persons, an independent mental health ombudsman program should be instituted.

Declares an intent that the state mental health ombudsman program make reasonable efforts to maintain and improve the current level and quality of mental health ombudsman services, taking into account the transition period from the current system of ombudsman programs within the regional support networks and state hospitals.

Declares an intent that federal medicaid requirements be complied with, and that the department of social and health services no longer provide mental health ombudsman services through the regional support networks and state hospitals effective July 1, 2005.

Declares an intent that commencing July 1, 2005, the funds currently expended by the regional support networks through their contracts with the department of social and health services to provide mental health ombudsman services, and expended by the department of social and health services to provide ombudsman or patient advocate services at Western state hospital and Eastern state hospital, shall be transferred to the department of community, trade, and economic development for use by the office of mental health ombudsman.

Provides that, effective July 1, 2004, the department of social and health services shall transfer three hundred twenty-two thousand eight hundred dollars from funding the office of consumer affairs and training funds provided for the ombudsman quality review teams within the mental health division of the department of social and health services for mental health ombudsman services through the regional support networks and state hospitals to the department of community, trade, and economic development to provide funding for the office of mental health ombudsman created in this act.