

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1456

As Passed House:

March 7, 2007

Title: An act relating to home visits by mental health professionals.

Brief Description: Providing backup for mental health professionals doing home visits.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Green, Hinkle, Appleton, Cody, Moeller, Strow, Crouse, Curtis, Seaquist, Jarrett, Hasegawa, Walsh, P. Sullivan, Buri, Simpson, O'Brien, Lantz, Hunt, McDonald, Sells, Schual-Berke, Linville, Kessler, Hankins, Haler, Skinner, Campbell, Morrell, Darneille, Armstrong, Dunshee, Fromhold, Kagi, Williams, Conway, Barlow, Grant, Priest, Dunn, Hunter, Hurst, Ericks, Pearson, Anderson, Clibborn, Pettigrew, Flannigan, Lovick, Dickerson, Kenney, Ormsby, Haigh, Wood, Rolfes, Santos and McDermott).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/12/07, 2/14/07 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/26/07, 3/3/07 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/7/07, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Mental health professionals will not be required to conduct home visits alone, and will be given resources to lessen the danger of home visits.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Campbell, Condotta, Curtis, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 34 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Dunshee, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Buri, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunn, Ericks, Fromhold, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Kretz, Linville, McDermott, McDonald, McIntire, Morrell, Pettigrew, Priest, Schual-Berke, Seaquist, P. Sullivan and Walsh.

Staff: Amy Skei (786-7140).

Background:

There are designated mental health professionals (DMHPs) who perform initial evaluations and detentions pursuant to the involuntary commitment statutes and provide crisis outreach services for individuals with mental disorders. These DMHPs occasionally evaluate people for involuntary detention or provide crisis outreach services in the homes of individuals with mental disorders.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

No DMHP or other mental health crisis outreach worker will be required to conduct home visits alone. Employers will equip mental health workers who engage in home visits with a communication device. Mental health workers dispatched on crisis outreach visits will have prompt access to any history of dangerousness or potential dangerousness on the client they are visiting, if available. All community mental health workers who work directly with clients will be provided with annual training on safety and violence prevention. The bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (Health Care & Wellness)

(In support) This is a carefully worked compromise between community mental health agencies and organizations representing community mental health workers. It will provide greater safety for community mental health workers.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: (Appropriations)

(In support) Last year the Marty Smith bill passed the House 76 to 22, and died in the Senate. During the interim at the request of legislators we worked with other stakeholders to recraft

the bill and reduce fiscal impact. We believe these changes should reduce the fiscal impact to the low end estimate of \$3.5 million or even less. Our union members who work in community mental health recognize that there is inherent danger in their jobs. No law is going to erase that fact. But the Marty Smith bill will improve safety for our workers through improved training and strengthen safety on community home visits. It has been a complicated process to come up with a reasonable estimate of what this will cost. There will be additional costs. This cannot be done within current resources.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (Health Care & Wellness) Representative Green, prime sponsor; Bruce Bardwell, Compass Health and Service Employees International Union; and Marie Manlangit, Service Employees International Union.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) Jonathan Rosenblum, SEIU 1199 Northwest; and Ann Christian, Washington Community Mental Health Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Health Care & Wellness) Jean Wessman, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.