

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1456

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, March 23, 2007
Ways & Means, March 30, 2007

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

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

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

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 3/20/07, 3/23/07 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 3/30/07 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland and McAuliffe.

Staff: Indu Thomas (786-7459)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Tim Yowell (786-7435)

Background: There are designated mental health professionals (DMHPs) who perform initial evaluations and detentions pursuant to the involuntary commitment statutes and provide

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crisis outreach services for individuals with mental disorders. DMHPs occasionally evaluate people for involuntary detention or provide crisis outreach services in the homes of individuals with mental disorders.

Summary of Substitute Bill: DMHPs or other mental health crisis outreach workers will not 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Human Services & Corrections): PRO: People grappling with mental illness are not inherently more dangerous than the public overall. Designated mental health professionals and other community mental health workers interact with clients when they are in crisis. Increasing numbers of community mental health workers have reported feeling unsafe on the job. This bill is substantially similar to the Senate companion. The amendment that the house added is actually an improvement. All interested parties worked together during the interim to improve the language of the bill that was proposed last year. Please pass the bill and provide the funding necessary for the appropriate implementation of this approach.

Persons Testifying (Human Services & Corrections): PRO: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Jonathan Rosenblum, Service Employees International Union 1199 NW; Chris Casey-Sanville, Kitsap Mental Health; Ann Christian, Washington Community Mental Health Council; Jean Wessman, Washington State Association of Counties.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means: on companion SB 5563): PRO: Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has worked closely with providers, regional support networks, the Department of Social and Health Services, and legislators during the interim to make changes and clarifications to similar legislation that did not pass the Senate last year. The most significant change is that doubling up of staff is now permissive, rather than mandatory in all cases, and the second responder can be a police officer, paramedic, or firefighter.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Jonathan Rosenblum, SEIU Local 1199 Campaign for Qualify Mental Health Care.