

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6804

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection, February 2, 2010

Title: An act relating to allowing the department of social and health services to adopt rules establishing standards for the review and certification of treatment facilities under the problem and pathological gambling treatment program.

Brief Description: Allowing the department of social and health services to adopt rules establishing standards for the review and certification of treatment facilities under the problem and pathological gambling treatment program.

Sponsors: Senator Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection: 2/02/10 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Franklin, Honeyford, King and Kline.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: The Problem and Pathological Gambling Program (Program) was established in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and is administered by the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (BHR). The Program provides for the prevention and treatment of problem and pathological gambling, and the training of professionals in the identification and treatment of problem and pathological gambling. When the Program was established, DSHS was permitted to contract for any services provided under the program but was not provided with rulemaking authority.

The Department of Health (DOH) currently recognizes the Registered Counselor designation for Chemical Dependency Practitioners (CDPs) as sufficient to allow them to treat problem gamblers. The majority of those who are CDPs in Washington State hold the Registered Counselor designation. Beginning July 1, 2010, the Registered Counselor credential is abolished.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

An agency affiliated counselor is a person who registers as a counselor, who is engaged in counseling, and is employed by a state agency to provide a specific counseling service or services.

Summary of Bill: DSHS is permitted to certify and contract with treatment facilities for services provided under the Program and to adopt rules establishing standards for the review and certification of treatment facilities under the Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 1, 2010.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is an opportunity to ensure continued treatment in the field of problem gambling in the state of Washington. Eighty-nine percent of current counselors will be impacted when the registered counselor designation goes away and they will be unable to continue to treat problem gamblers. They will be allowed to certify with the state and get an agency affiliation and continue their work after July 1. If the bill does not pass, many problem gamblers would not be able to get adequate treatment and they and their families would continue to suffer. Compulsive gamblers need these treatment programs for the support, understanding, and their willingness to listen to their problems and not judge.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Maureen Greeley, Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling; Robert Shope, Balanced Perspectives Counseling; JoAnne.