
Community Development & Housing Committee

HB 1811

Brief Description: Allowing for informed telephonic consent for access to housing or homelessness services.

Sponsors: Representatives Springer, Roberts and Stanford.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows personally identifying information about homeless individuals collected for the Washington Homeless Client Management Information System to be collected over the telephone.

Hearing Date: 2/9/11

Staff: Jennifer Thornton (786-7147).

Background:

The Homeless Housing and Assistance Act of 2005 required the Department of Commerce (Department) to develop a management information system for the homeless population. Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2418 of 2006 added additional specifications, including:

- requiring the Department to implement the Washington Homeless Client Management Information System (HMIS) by December 31, 2009 and to update it at least annually;
- specifying that the system include information from the Washington homeless census, from state agencies, and from organizations providing services to the homeless population;
- allowing data to be collected only after having obtained informed, reasonably time limited written consent from the homeless individual;
- requiring information to be collected in a manner consistent with federal informed consent guidelines regarding human research; and
- directing that the information system serve as an online information and referral system.

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.

The HMIS is an electronic record system that enables information-gathering about and continuous case management of homeless persons across agencies. Homeless service providers collect information about their clients and input it into the HMIS, so that it can be matched with information from other providers in the state to get accurate counts of homeless clients and the services they need. The statewide HMIS is designed to meet US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and state requirements as well as local provider needs.

Individually identifiable client data is only accessible to individuals authorized by the Department to access the database. Each client must sign a form to consent to or deny the collection of his or her personally identifying information for the HMIS.

Summary of Bill:

Personally identifying information about homeless individuals collected for the Washington Homeless Client Management Information System, which can currently only be obtained with written consent, may now also be collected over the telephone. If collected over the telephone, written consent must be obtained at the first time the individual is physically present at an organization with access to the Washington Homeless Client Management Information System.

Safeguards to protect privacy rights consistent with federal requirements on data collection must be in place whether the information is collected in person or over the telephone.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 7, 2011

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.