

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1811

C 239 L 11
Synopsis as Enacted

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

Sponsors: House Committee on Community Development & Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Springer, Roberts and Stanford).

House Committee on Community Development & Housing
Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections

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. Legislation enacted in 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 HMIS include information from the Washington homeless census, state agencies, and 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 HMIS serve as an online information and referral system.

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 United States 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 consenting or denying the collection of his or her personally identifying information for the HMIS.

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.

Summary:

Personally identifying information about homeless individuals collected for the HMIS, which may currently be obtained only 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 HMIS.

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. The Department must adopt policies for destroying paper documents containing personally identifiable information. These policies must not conflict with any federal data requirements.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	97	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2011