

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1858

As Passed House:
March 4, 2011

Title: An act relating to the department of social and health services' authority with regard to semi-secure and secure crisis residential centers and HOPE centers.

Brief Description: Concerning the department of social and health services' authority with regard to semi-secure and secure crisis residential centers and HOPE centers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Roberts, Parker, Kagi, Dickerson, Goodman, Lytton, Jacks, Probst, Walsh, Carlyle, Kenney and Ormsby).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/11/11, 2/17/11 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/4/11, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to establish facilities that include any combination of secure or semi-secure Crisis Residential Centers (CRCs) and HOPE centers.
- Requires the DSHS to adopt rules to license co-located facilities.
- Requires the DSHS to contract for HOPE center beds and Responsible Living Skills Programs with the goal of facilitating service coordination with CRCs.
- Requires the DSHS to contract for a continuum of short-term stabilization services.
- Requires the DSHS to adopt rules regarding flexible payment structures, center-specific licensing waivers, or other appropriate measures to increase utilization and provide flexibility.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

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.

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson, Goodman, Johnson, Orwall and Overstreet.

Staff: Megan Palchak (786-7120).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) contracts with vendors who provide a variety of residential programs specific to older youth in crisis who need shelter and assistance. These residential options include: secure and semi-secure Crisis Residential Centers (CRCs), HOPE centers, and Responsible Living Skills Programs. Separate rules govern each program. Some providers operate more than one program within one physical facility.

Crisis Residential Centers have operated in Washington since 1980 to serve youth who are homeless, those who seek shelter including runaway youth, and those transported by law enforcement or the DSHS. The CRCs consist of both semi-secure facilities and secure facilities. Secure CRCs were established in 1995. Secure CRCs are designed to prevent youth from leaving without parental or staff permission for a short period of time while they receive support to stabilize during a period of crisis. Secure CRCs include some facilities located within or adjacent to a juvenile detention facility, but do not allow for in-person contact between youth in the CRC and juveniles being held in the detention facility. Some secure CRCs are community-based.

In 1999 the Legislature passed the HOPE Act, which established services for older street youth without family support and for whom foster placements have not been successful. HOPE centers are facilities where youth can stay for up to 30 days while they are evaluated for services. The Responsible Living Skills Program provides long-term residential placement for older youth and other services to help youth gain independent living skills.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The DSHS is required to allow co-location of secure and semi-secure CRCs and HOPE centers, and shall adopt rules to allow licensing of these co-located facilities. Youth in co-located facilities may not be placed in secure facilities, except as authorized in statute. The DSHS shall contract for a continuum of short-term stabilization services and collaborate with service providers in a manner that allows facilities to be located in a geographically representative manner. The DSHS is authorized to contract for the operation of HOPE center beds and Responsible Living Skills Programs with the goal of facilitating the coordination of services provided for youth by such programs and those provided by CRCs. The DSHS is authorized to adopt rules regarding flexible payment structures, center specific licensing waivers, or other appropriate measures to increase utilization and provide flexibility, while continuing to meet the statutory goals of each program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Dissolving barriers and silos is part of a larger legislative effort to increase flexibility and efficiency. This bill will maximize programs and services for older youth in need of shelter and services. Safety and staffing ratios had been a concern in one facility with mixed beds, but those concerns have been addressed. The staffing ratio is higher and youths' services have been tailored. Blended funding will allow for flexibility for services for kids. The severe cuts last year put CRCs on life support. This bill will allow programs to survive and be more efficient. Some facilities are forced to operate two separate locations due to licensing requirements and frequently have problems with over and underutilization. Allowing for greater flexibility will help stabilize utilization.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Roberts, prime sponsor; Maggie Faust, Spruce Street Inn; Dennis Morrow and Tillie Makepeace, Janus Youth.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.