

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2643

As of February 24, 2012

Title: An act relating to purchase of care in institutions for mental diseases.

Brief Description: Concerning purchase of care in institutions for mental diseases.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Hinkle, Dickerson, Springer, Goodman and Moeller.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/10/12, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/23/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: Alcohol detoxification is the abrupt cessation of alcohol intake coupled with drug therapy to prevent alcohol withdrawal. Withdrawal from alcohol for persons with alcohol dependence can be fatal if not properly managed. The Medicaid program pays for inpatient hospital detoxification of acute alcohol or other drug intoxicants for eligible clients. Health care purchasing for Medicaid clients is managed by the Health Care Authority.

An institution for mental diseases is defined under federal law as a hospital, nursing facility, or other institution of more than 16 beds, that is primarily engaged in providing diagnosis, treatment, or care of persons with mental diseases, including medical attention, nursing care, and related services. Federal law prohibits the use of federal funds to contribute to the cost of medically necessary inpatient care for beneficiaries aged 18-64 in an institution for mental diseases.

Summary of Bill: It is specified that the Department of Social and Health Services' authority to purchase care in institutions for mental diseases by contract includes inpatient mental health and inpatient hospital detoxification of acute alcohol or other drug intoxication.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Currently Fairfax Hospital, an institution for mental diseases, treats chemical dependency patients who are covered by private insurance and private payers. An administrative regulation prevents the state from purchasing detoxification services from Fairfax on behalf of Medicaid clients. We believe there is a shortage of beds available and we want to be able to treat these patients. The head of the agency refused to initiate a rule change and told us we would have to seek a legislative fix.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Nick Federici, Fairfax Hospital.