

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5475

As of February 15, 2013

Title: An act relating to the creating of a licensing category for receiving care centers.

Brief Description: Creating a licensing category for receiving care centers.

Sponsors: Senators Harper and Hobbs.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/12/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Joan Miller (786-7784)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has the authority to establish licensing requirements for foster homes and other agencies or entities that provide care for children residing in out-of-home placements. Receiving care centers provide immediate placement and care for children who have been removed from their homes. Receiving care centers have entered into an agreement with regional DSHS offices to provide emergency or crisis care to children. Currently, receiving care centers are not formally licensed by DSHS.

Summary of Bill: A receiving care center is defined as an agency that provides short-term emergency care or crisis care for up to seven days to children who have been removed from their home by Child Protective Services. Receiving care centers serve children from birth to 12 years of age or children over the age of 12 who have a sibling less than 13 years of age being admitted to receiving centers. DSHS must adopt rules that establish a licensing category for receiving care centers.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Todd McNeal's family is a long-time foster family and is on the after-hours list, meaning most of the children they have cared for have come to them in the middle of the night after traumatic experiences, such as drug raids, domestic violence, and DUIs. One of the first things asked is whether the child has any communicable diseases because they can be common in children who need foster care. In such a situation, Todd would need to meet the social worker and child at the doctor's office to avoid spreading the disease to the other children in his household. In one particular case, the family was told that a child placed in their care did not have any communicable diseases, but within three hours, Todd discovered that the child was infested with scabies. Basically, the child was bounced around from home to home because there was nowhere to treat the communicable disease and prepare the child for foster care, but this is the role that receiving care centers play. When children are in this situation, they can come to the receiving care center and be treated for any communicable diseases. The receiving care center has partnerships with many hospitals, and it documents any abuse.

OTHER: If there were other receiving care centers that were patterned exactly like Hand in Hand with a staff of trained volunteers, then they would be an important resource for DSHS and Children's Administration. DSHS does have a couple of issues that it would like clarified: (1) it is not clear whether receiving care centers would be staffed solely by volunteers; and (2) it is not clear whether receiving care centers may choose their own hours of operation.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Todd McNeal, Hand in Hand.

OTHER: Randy Hart, DSHS, Children's Administration.