

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6122

As Passed Senate, February 18, 2014

Title: An act relating to enacting planning measures and strategies that provide for future long-term service and support needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Washington state.

Brief Description: Concerning long-term planning for developmental disabilities services.

Sponsors: Senators O'Ban, Conway, Dammeier, Darneille, Angel, Litzow and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 1/28/14, 1/30/14 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/18/14, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Becker, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Pedersen, Ranking Member; Angel, Bailey, Cleveland, Keiser and Parlette.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) serves clients in a variety of community and institutional settings. The level of support needed by DDA clients to assist them in their daily lives and help them participate in the community varies greatly across individuals. Some clients who have exceptional care and treatment needs receive care in state-run Residential Habilitation Centers (RHCs). Others may receive services through residential programs in community living situations, or receive services in their own homes. Services are offered under waivers; Home and Community Based Waiver services are a capped program and are only provided to individuals based on available funding. A number of individuals meet the statutory definition of having a developmental disability, have requested a service, and are waiting for an available slot.

On July 31, 2013, the State Auditor's Office released its Performance Audit of the DDA within DSHS. The Performance Audit found that over 20,500 individuals with developmental disabilities receive services from the state while an additional 15,100 who meet financial and physical eligibility requirements do not currently receive any 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.

The Performance Audit determined that this is "due in part to policy choices the state has made about the services it offers combined with insufficient funding to meet the demand for services." The Performance Audit recommended that the Legislature set policy and develop strategies to use cost-effective service options such as: (1) reducing the number of RHCs; (2) expanding crisis stabilization and emergency respite services in the community; and (3) providing resources to build peer support networks in the community to aid clients and their families with transportation, respite, and day activities. The Performance Audit also recommended that the Legislature set targets to reduce the waitlist and prioritize the people waiting for services by their needs.

Summary of Bill: By January 1, 2015, the DDA must identify stakeholders to participate in workgroups to address the issues raised in the State Auditor's Performance Audit. Items to be addressed by the workgroup include the following: (1) funding scenarios to reduce the number of people on the waitlist; (2) ways to streamline waitlist management and prioritizing services; (3) ways to increase respite and support in the community; (4) developing strategies to retain an adequate workforce; (5) moving to a managed care approach with self direction; and (6) identifying the various Medicaid waiver and state plan options that would make better use of state funds and make the system more accessible to people in need of services.

The workgroups must report their results to the Legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We need to address the waitlist of people who are waiting for services from the DDA. These people are waiting for respite care and for other services. People are sacrificing for their families, and we need to rethink how to deliver services to include the needs of families. This workgroup is needed to come up with solutions. We need to explore employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. We need to improve day services. We need to build sustainable resources for issues related to the needs of the community; this includes transportation and caregiver training. The group cannot absorb more budget cuts. The Performance Audits demonstrate the need for system reform. Many people do not have services. We need to address the waitlist for services and address how these services are provided. The stakeholder group is a good first step. We need to support families so they can continue to care for people in their own homes. We need to expand peer support networks and provide more outreach to the community.

OTHER: The Performance Audit of the DDA was incomplete and inaccurate. The stakeholder workgroup is just another workgroup and will be ignored. People with developmental disabilities access several services and we need to look at the whole budget; savings achieved can be used to care for people.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator O'Ban, prime sponsor; Marcie Osborne, Community Employment Alliance, Executive Director; David Lord, Disability Rights WA; Sue Elliott, The Arc of WA State; Donna Patrick, Developmental Disabilities Council; Cherie Tessier, citizen.

OTHER: Cheryl Felak, Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion.