

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1756

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety

Title: An act relating to community policing at western state hospital and the surrounding areas.

Brief Description: Concerning community policing at and around western state hospital.

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, Muri, Kirby, Goodman, Sawyer and Van De Wege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety: 2/10/15, 2/13/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires Western State Hospital to enter into a contract with the City of Lakewood, Washington, for the provision of community policing services at the hospital and in the surrounding areas.
- Appropriates funding for the fiscal biennium 2015-17 for the community policing services contract.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Orwall, Vice Chair; Appleton, Moscoso and Pettigrew.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Griffey and Wilson.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

Western State Hospital (WSH) is one of two state-owned adult psychiatric hospitals that provide involuntary inpatient treatment for individuals with mental disorders who are committed by civil and criminal courts. The facility is located in the Lakewood, Washington,

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area of Pierce County. The WSH has 827 inpatient beds and provides services to individuals from 19 western Washington counties.

As part of the 2013-15 Operating Budget, a total of \$462,000 was appropriated (for the 2013-15 biennium) to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) solely for a community partnership between the WSH and the City of Lakewood to support community policing efforts in the Lakewood community surrounding the WSH. The funding was to pay for the salaries, benefits, supplies, and equipment for one full-time investigator, one full-time law enforcement officer, and one full-time community service officer in the City of Lakewood. A similar appropriation has been incorporated in prior operating budgets back to fiscal year 2008.

An additional \$90,000 was also appropriated to the DSHS for the 2013-15 biennium for the Lakewood Police Department to provide direct services at the WSH.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The WSH must enter into a contract with the city in which it is located for the provision of community policing services at the hospital and in the surrounding area. Community policing services includes, but is not limited to, a neighborhood patrol officer, community service officer, and detective or investigator. The officers will proactively address public safety issues at the hospital such as interacting with the public about incidents relating to the state hospital, investigating complaints of patient and staff related incidents, and conducting training.

Beginning in fiscal biennium 2015-17, the amount of the contract must be no less than \$462,000. In each subsequent biennium, the contract must increase by 1 percent, but may never exceed \$750,000.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The community policing services that are provided by the officers are clarified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The WSH is an employer to approximately 1,800 individuals. It has about 830 inpatient beds and last year served approximately 1,876 patients. It is a key component of the statewide mental health system in Washington.

Prior to the community policing collaboration, one of the challenges was getting the proper information to the prosecutor's office when a crime took place. Now, it is easier to get the appropriate paperwork to the prosecutor's office for charging purposes. Currently, officers patrol the grounds as well as the surrounding neighborhood, they ensure that incidents that occur on the campus are addressed, and they also facilitate communication between the City of Lakewood and the hospital staff. The current collaboration between the WSH and the City of Lakewood has reduced police calls by 40 percent and the program has proven that it promotes safety.

The City of Lakewood has worked collaboratively with the WSH to ensure that both the residents and staff feel safe. Lakewood started the community policing program in 2007. Each year since 2008, the community policing program has been funded in a budget provision. This method is unpredictable and makes it challenging to hire police officers and staff. The state contribution to the program is \$231,000 per year, and has stayed the same since the inception of the program. The City of Lakewood has picked up the remaining increased costs associated with the program equating to approximately \$100,000. This bill will ensure that the funding becomes a more reliable and predictable source in the future.

Policing at a mental health hospital creates a lot of challenges. The community policing program makes the WSH a safer place to work.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kilduff, prime sponsor; Don Anderson, City of Lakewood; and Mike Zaro, Lakewood Police Department.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.