

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6477

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As of February 3, 2016

**Title:** An act relating to a business and occupation tax deduction for chemical dependency services provided by a health or social welfare organization.

**Brief Description:** Concerning a business and occupation tax deduction for chemical dependency services provided by a health or social welfare organization.

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

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/01/16.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

**Staff:** Kevin Black (786-7747)

**Background:** The business and occupation tax (B&O Tax) is a tax imposed by the state of Washington for the act and privilege of engaging in business activities. The tax is measured by application of rates against the value of products, gross proceeds of sales, or gross income of the business.

A behavioral health organization (BHO) is a county authority, or group of county authorities, which contracts with the state to provide a network of mental health and chemical dependency services for clients in a defined region of the state. The BHOs pass through Medicaid and non-Medicaid funds to subcontracted providers and function as managed care organizations. A BHO is a successor organization to a regional support network, which until March 31, 2016, provides only mental health services. The first BHOs, which incorporate chemical dependency services, will be formed by contract starting April 1, 2016.

A health or social welfare organization receives a B&O tax deduction for amounts received as compensation for providing mental health services under a government-funded program. A BHO receives a B&O tax deduction for amounts received from the state of Washington for distribution to a health or social welfare organization that is eligible to deduct the distribution. These tax deductions expire August 1, 2016.

**Summary of Bill:** The B&O tax deduction allowing a BHO and a health or social welfare organization to deduct amounts received for providing mental health services under a

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government-funded program is extended to include government funds received for providing chemical dependency services. The expiration date of this deduction is extended to January 1, 2020.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill recognizes that chemical dependency is becoming integrated with mental health in BHOs. The bill provides greater mental health services for citizens in Pierce County. Without this exemption, \$1.9 million will be returned to the state by way of the B&O tax, instead of impacting the citizens of Pierce County who need mental health treatment. Pierce County has taken a number of hits over the years. Our RSN lost about \$7 million in cuts last year. If this exemption expires, those funds will come directly out of nonprofit budgets, restricting our ability to deliver care. Providers are already struggling, and can't take another financial hit.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Dammeier, prime sponsor; David Knutson, Optum Health; Terri Card, Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.