

**SB 6656-S.E - DIGEST**

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Declares it is the intent of the legislature that the executive and legislative branches work collaboratively to maximize access to, safety of, and the therapeutic role of the state hospitals to best serve patients while ensuring the safety of patients and employees.

Establishes a select committee on quality improvement in state hospitals.

Creates the governor's behavioral health innovation fund with money in the fund provided solely to improve quality of care, patient outcomes, patient and staff safety, and the efficiency of operations at the state hospitals.

Expires July 1, 2019.

VETO MESSAGE ON ESSB 6656

April 19, 2016

To the Honorable President and Members,  
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to Sections 2, 7, 9, and 12, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6656 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the reform of practices at state hospitals."

Section 2 refers to the creation of a transition plan for changing the current financing structure for civil bed utilization. While I agree a transition plan is needed, I would prefer to use the consultant's recommendations to inform the development of the plan. The consultant is funded in the Office of Financial Management's (OFM) budget. I will charge OFM to work with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the consultant to address the requirements of this section and report back to me and the Select Committee on Quality Improvement in State Hospitals by November 2016.

Section 7 creates rules for how funds from the Governor's Behavioral Health Innovation Fund can be used. While I agree with many of the categories for funding, I am concerned that funding cannot be used for compensation increases for hospital personnel; a critical tool in increasing staffing at the state hospitals. As a result, I have vetoed Section 7.

Section 9 requires DSHS to assure that several policies are implemented, subject to the availability of funding. This section is effective in July of 2016. While I agree with many of the policies stipulated in the bill, this section requires implementation of policies that have not had the full benefit of the recommendations made by the consultants called for in section 5. In addition, provisions that require a plan to use all the funding appropriated for Enhanced Services Facilities is duplicative of the requirements of Section 11. For these reasons, I have vetoed Section 9.

Section 12 requires the Office of Financial Management to create a job class for Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners [Practitioners] (ARNP) and Physician Assistants (PA) to allow them to work at the top of their practice. While I agree that allowing ARNPs and other mid-level professionals to practice in our hospitals should be an important part of the state's strategy to address workforce shortages, the requirement to create the job class is not consistent with the process provided in law for creation of classified positions. I have therefore vetoed Section 12.

For these reasons I have vetoed Sections 2, 7, 9, and 12 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No.

With the exception of Sections 2, 7, 9, and 12, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6656 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jay Inslee  
Governor