

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6416

As of January 29, 2020

Title: An act relating to providing telehealth services at schools.

Brief Description: Providing telehealth services to schools.

Sponsors: Senators Cleveland, Rivers, Wellman, Wilson, C., Das and Randall.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 1/24/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Health (DOH) to grant money to school-based health centers for telehealth projects that assist school nurses.
- Appropriates \$950,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the state general fund to DOH to implement the grant.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Staff: LeighBeth Merrick (786-7445)

Background: Current state law authorizes school district boards of directors to permit the rental, lease, or occasional use of surplus real property if certain requirements are met. In a 1989 Office of the Attorney General (AGO) opinion, the AGO concluded school districts may lease surplus school district property to public or private entities on the condition that the leased property be used for an adolescent health care clinic, where the board of directors finds such a use is compatible with the district's other uses for its property, and where the clinic is not, directly or indirectly, operated or controlled by the school district.

According to the Washington School-Based Health Alliance, there are more than 50 school-based health centers throughout the state.

Summary of Bill: Beginning June 30, 2020, DOH, in consultation with Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), must grant money to eligible school-based health center projects to expand student access to mental and physical health care services and to improve the health and education of students through the use of telehealth. To be

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eligible for the grant, a school-based health center must enter into an agreement with a school district to provide telehealth in conjunction with a school nurse who is located at a site other than the school-based health center, and to allocate a portion of the grant funds to increase school nurse capacity and offset the school district's costs incurred by participating in the grant project.

Grant funds may be used to:

- compensate a school nurse, and a licensed health care practitioner and administrative or technical staff located at a school-based health center for services provided pursuant to the project;
- cover the costs of technical equipment necessary to provide telehealth, and technical assistance for the telehealth equipment; and
- cover the costs related to the project's provision of telehealth.

DOH must establish a schedule for school-based health centers to report on the progress of their projects and a project evaluation process. DOH must submit a report to the Legislature on the effectiveness and success of the projects by December 31, 2024.

Appropriation: The bill contains an appropriation totaling \$950,000 from the General Fund-State.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will increase access to health care in a school setting and provides an opportunity to demonstrate existing telehealth and virtual care platforms in schools. Telehealth can expand school nurse capacity, deliver more health care in underserved counties, and address both physical and mental health for parents and students to choose to participate in the program. We strongly support a portion of the grant to fund school nurses for current work and work on the project. School nurses play a pivotal role in a student's capacity to learn. The grant would require a school nurse and not every school has a nurse which means some districts would not be eligible to apply.

CON: Public schools should not be involved in health care. Every family makes personal decisions about their health care and schools should not be interfering with this. Parents need to be involved in their child's medical care and they should be the only ones to choose who provides their child medical care.

OTHER: The bill's program blurs legal lines between the state, school districts, health practitioners and increases liability for school districts. We would like language added to ensure the school district is not exposed to any financial liability for medical malpractice.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Annette Cleveland, Prime Sponsor; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Joe Neigel, Prevention Services Manager, Monroe Behavioral Health Team; Katherine Mahoney, OSPI; Marissa Ingalls, Coordinated Care of

Washington; Jennifer Stoll, OCHIN; Dave Arbaugh, OCHIN.

CON: Dawn Land, citizen; Bernadette Pajer, citizen.

OTHER: Rich McBride, Director of Risk Management, Schools Insurance of Washington.

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