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**SENATE BILL 5644**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2022 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Wagoner and Frockt

Prefiled 01/04/22. Read first time 01/10/22. Referred to Committee on Health & Long Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing quality behavioral health co-  
2 response services; adding a new section to chapter 36.28A RCW; and  
3 creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that behavioral  
6 health co-response has experienced a surge in popularity in  
7 Washington state in the past five years. The legislature recognizes  
8 the importance of training for those involved in co-responder  
9 programs to promote high standards within programs and to enhance the  
10 skills of those already working in this field. The purpose of this  
11 act is to develop a core curriculum relevant to first responders and  
12 behavioral health professionals working on co-response teams, to  
13 create ongoing learning opportunities for emerging and established  
14 co-response programs, and to develop the workforce to fill future co-  
15 responder hiring needs.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 36.28A  
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) Subject to amounts appropriated for this specific purpose,  
19 the Washington state association of sheriffs and police chiefs shall  
20 partner with a statewide organization of first responders, behavioral

1 health professionals, and project managers working in co-response  
2 programs to:

3 (a) Establish a co-responder learning academy in 2022 for  
4 individuals working in co-response programs to convene for training,  
5 networking, and sharing of best practices, including track offerings  
6 for different-sized jurisdictions and police-, fire-, and emergency  
7 medical services-based co-response programs;

8 (b) Establish four to six learning sites in Washington state with  
9 structured learning components and areas of instruction where  
10 individuals interested in co-response can spend a day learning with  
11 an experienced co-response team;

12 (c) Partner with the department of health to develop a  
13 certification specific to behavioral health professionals working in  
14 the co-response field, including completion of a core curriculum,  
15 observation of programs, and completion of a specified number of  
16 hours of field work, for the purpose of raising standards for co-  
17 response programs, encouraging interest in co-response programs, and  
18 promoting workforce development; and

19 (d) Report on progress and present workforce development  
20 recommendations specific to co-response programs to the governor and  
21 relevant committees of the legislature by June 30, 2023.

22 (2) To accomplish these goals the association shall hire a co-  
23 response training coordinator with consultation and consent from the  
24 statewide organization of first responders, behavioral health  
25 professionals, and project managers working in co-response programs  
26 specified in subsection (1) of this section. The coordinator shall  
27 work closely with this statewide organization and consult with a  
28 spectrum of co-response programs and other relevant entities such as  
29 the Washington state firefighters' association and the department of  
30 health.

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