
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5894

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senate Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Frockt, Conway, Hasegawa, Nguyen, Nobles, Robinson, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 01/31/22.

1 AN ACT Relating to integrating means for payment of community
2 health workers into primary care; adding new sections to chapter
3 41.05 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that in 2021, over
6 44 percent of middle school students and 57 percent of high school
7 students reported feeling depressed most days. One in five mothers
8 suffer from mood disorders after birth while only 16 percent receive
9 treatment. Meanwhile, 78 percent of primary care doctors who refer
10 kids for behavioral health care receive no further information or
11 coordination after the referral. The unique relationship between
12 pediatric primary care providers and their patients makes primary
13 care well-positioned for investment in services and supports by
14 community health workers. These workers drive connectivity to other
15 parts of the delivery system, address social determinants of health,
16 and lower the total cost of care while freeing up licensed health
17 care professionals to practice at the top of their scope of license,
18 improving patient outcomes.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 41.05
20 RCW to read as follows:

1 Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
2 specific purpose, by January 1, 2023, the authority shall establish a
3 pediatric community health worker program for reimbursement of
4 services to patients up to age 18 provided by community health
5 workers in primary care clinics whose patients are significantly
6 comprised of pediatric patients enrolled in medical assistance under
7 chapter 74.09 RCW. Community health workers funded under this section
8 may provide outreach, informal counseling, and social supports for
9 health-related social needs.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 41.05
11 RCW to read as follows:

12 (1) The authority shall work with stakeholders to develop a
13 multipayer primary care transformation model to improve access to and
14 quality of services covered by medicaid, public employees' benefits
15 board, and school employees' benefits board programs and begin
16 phasing in value-based payment and accountability for primary care
17 clinics starting January 1, 2023.

18 (2) The multipayer primary care transformation model shall, among
19 other components, explore sustainable reimbursement options for
20 integration of community health workers in primary care to address
21 the health-related social needs of families.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The department of health shall contract
23 with an organization that represents pediatric primary care needs in
24 Washington state to convene community-based organizations dedicated
25 to children's mental health in order to establish and implement an
26 equity-focused curriculum by January 1, 2023, with the goal to
27 prepare community health workers to meet the unique needs of
28 children, adolescents, and their families.

--- END ---