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## Health Care & Wellness Committee

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### HB 1242

**Brief Description:** Creating a behavioral health work group to study the root causes of rising behavioral health issues in Washington communities.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Dent, Davis, Ortiz-Self, Doglio, Eslick and Lekanoff.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Health to convene a workgroup to study the root causes of rising behavioral health issues in Washington.
- Requires the workgroup to submit a progress report by December 15, 2023 and findings and recommendations by November 15, 2024 to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature.

**Hearing Date:** 1/17/23

**Staff:** Ingrid Lewis, (786-7293).

#### Background:

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, one in five adults in the United States have a clinically significant behavioral health disorder and the prevalence and severity of mental health conditions in children and teens has increased sharply.

#### Summary of Bill:

The Department of Health (DOH) is required to convene a work group to study the root causes of rising behavioral health issues in Washington. Emphasis on individuals with experience in the behavioral health system is required for the work group. Members shall consist of the following:

- individuals who have received behavioral health services in a variety of settings and

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- circumstances;
- family members of individuals who have received behavioral health services;
- behavioral health treatment providers;
- tribal representatives with experience providing or receiving behavioral health services from tribal health departments;
- members of the clergy;
- law enforcement officers who have training and experience in behavioral health and behavioral health crisis response;
- behavioral health advocates; and
- any other individual deemed appropriate by the DOH who has actual, practical experience with the behavioral health system.

Treatment providers serving on the workgroup may not represent or be employees of organizations or interest groups representing the interests of health care providers or behavioral health stakeholders.

At a minimum, the work group must discuss the factors leading to increased demand for behavioral health services; methods to address behavioral health workforce shortages; the current status of the behavioral health system, including barriers and gaps; the effectiveness of the integrated care initiative as it relates to access for the seriously mentally ill, reductions in hospitalization and institutionalization, improvements in community-based care, and support for providers in the community serving the seriously mentally ill; and any other suggestions for improving the behavioral health system.

The workgroup must submit to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature a progress report no later than December 15, 2023 and its findings and recommendations no later than November 15, 2024.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 16, 2023.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.