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**SENATE BILL 5031**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators C. Wilson, Hasegawa, Krishnadasan, Nobles, Saldaña, Trudeau, and Wellman

AN ACT Relating to statewide health care coordination and communication regarding individuals housed in facilities of confinement; and adding a new chapter to Title 70 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that the growing number of projects and programs between and within government agencies related to the health of individuals housed in confinement settings create challenges in coordination and communication. These health issues include mental health, traumatic brain injury, substance use, communicable disease and infection prevention, health preventive services, and excess mortality.

The legislature further finds that health in correctional institutions and other confinement settings is vital to public health and reentry because many individuals in these settings interact with and return to their communities. Statewide coordination and communication efforts for treating individuals in correctional and other confinement facilities will positively influence the community and reentry of such individuals.

The legislature intends to address the lack of coordination and communication caused by the numerous projects and programs relating to individuals housed in confinement settings by creating a new council within the department of health that will be supported by representation from state agencies, local governments, federally recognized tribes, and other relevant parties.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Confined" or "confinement" means incarcerated in a correctional institution or admitted to an institute for mental disease, as defined in 42 C.F.R. part 435, Sec. 1010.

(2) "Correctional institution" has the meaning provided in RCW 9.94.049.

(3) "Council" means the council of health care coordination for youth and adults in facilities of confinement.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The council of health care coordination for youth and adults in facilities of confinement is hereby created and located in the department of health for the purpose of addressing coordination and communication between federally recognized tribes and state and local agencies that house individuals in confinement settings.

(2)(a) The council shall be composed of the following voting members:

(i) A chair appointed by the secretary of the department of health;

(ii) The secretary of the department of social and health services, or the secretary's designee;

(iii) The director of the health care authority, or the director's designee;

(iv) The secretary of the department of corrections, or the secretary's designee;

(v) The secretary of the department of children, youth, and families, or the secretary's designee;

(vi) One member representing the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs;

(vii) One member representing a federally recognized tribe in Washington state, appointed by the governor's office of Indian affairs;

(viii) The governor or the governor's designee;

(ix) One member representing county juvenile court administrators;

(x) One member with lived experience of using the health care system in an institution of total confinement; and

(xi) Two members representing behavioral health administrative services organizations.

(b) The council may also include as nonvoting members other attendees as councilmembers deem appropriate including, but not limited to, additional persons with lived experience of using the health care system in an institution of total confinement or members of the public with knowledge of carceral health care.

(c) Members of the council shall serve without additional compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 while attending meetings of the council or on official business authorized by the council. The department of health must provide stipends for councilmembers in accordance with RCW 43.03.220.

(3) The secretary of the department of health shall appoint a physician, an epidemiologist, and an administrative assistant to support the work of the council. The secretary of the department of health shall designate either the physician or the epidemiologist to be the chair of the council, a full-time position. The council may select other officers as the voting members deem necessary.

(4) The council shall meet at least quarterly. Additional meetings may be called by the chair and shall be called by the chair upon the written request of eight members. Meetings must be held in accordance with the open public meetings act, chapter 42.30 RCW.

(5) Councilmembers are responsible for tracking activities within their respective agencies or jurisdictions that relate to the health of individuals housed in facilities of confinement.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The council shall review current laws and policies relating to health care information sharing among agencies that house individuals in jails, the department of corrections, juvenile rehabilitation facilities, juvenile detention facilities, western and eastern state hospitals, the special commitment center, and other entities as the council finds appropriate. The council shall make recommendations to:

(a) Improve and ensure information and data sharing among and within state agencies regarding the health of adults and juveniles in such facilities;

(b) Improve coordination among and within state and local agencies and avoid duplication;

(c) Provide an easy, fast, and effective forum for communication and information sharing among the department of health, the health care authority, the department of social and health services, the department of corrections, the department of children, youth, and families, the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, court administrators, and federal, local, and community organizations; and

(d) Improve communication and information sharing between the state and its federal partners to proactively address public health issues.

(2) The council may appoint such advisory committees as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter. The council shall review each advisory committee on a biennial basis to determine whether to continue the advisory committee.

(3) A council member must participate in or coordinate with any additional councils or statewide activities created in the future involving the health of adults and youth who are incarcerated or otherwise housed in confinement settings.

(4) By November 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the council must submit a report on the council's activities accomplished in the prior year to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature. The report shall include whether the allocation of personnel, composition of the council, and charge of the council are adequate to meet its purpose. The report must comply with the requirements of RCW 43.01.036.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 4 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 70 RCW.

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