
SENATE BILL 5427

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators C. Wilson, Hasegawa, Nobles, and Trudeau

Read first time 01/22/25. Referred to Committee on Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to extending the program to address complex cases
2 of children in crisis; amending RCW 43.06.535; providing an
3 expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.06.535 and 2023 c 423 s 1 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The governor must maintain a children and youth multisystem
8 care (~~coordinator~~) project director to serve as a state lead on
9 addressing complex cases of children in crisis. The children and
10 youth multisystem care (~~coordinator~~) project director must:

11 (a) Direct:

12 (i) The appropriate use of state and other resources to a child
13 in crisis, and that child's family, if appropriate; and

14 (ii) Appropriate and timely action by state agencies to serve
15 children in crisis;

16 (b) Have access to flexible funds to support:

17 (i) The safe discharge of children in crisis from hospitals; and

18 (ii) Long-term, appropriate placement for children in crisis who
19 are dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW; and

20 (c) Coordinate with:

1 (i) The rapid response team established under RCW 43.216.205 to
2 make sure that resources are effectively identified and mobilized for
3 people who meet the definition of child in crisis and a youth or
4 young adult exiting a publicly funded system of care; and

5 (ii) Youth behavioral health and inpatient navigator teams to
6 efficiently and effectively mobilize services for a child in crisis.

7 (2) The children and youth multisystem care (~~coordinator~~)
8 project director created under this section, in coordination with the
9 department of children, youth, and families, the health care
10 authority, the office of financial management, and the department of
11 social and health services, shall develop and implement a rapid care
12 team for the purpose of supporting and identifying appropriate
13 services and living arrangements for a child in crisis, and that
14 child's family, if appropriate. (~~The rapid care team created under
15 this section must be implemented as soon as possible, but no later
16 than January 1, 2024.~~)

17 (3) In creating the rapid care team required under this section,
18 the children and youth multisystem care (~~coordinator~~) project
19 director created under this section shall develop and implement a
20 system for:

21 (a) Identifying children in crisis who should be served by the
22 rapid care team;

23 (b) Initiating the rapid care team in a timely manner that
24 reduces the time a child in crisis spends in a hospital without a
25 medical need;

26 (c) Locating services and connecting youth and families with the
27 appropriate services to allow the child in crisis to safely discharge
28 from a hospital;

29 (d) Screening referrals for a child in crisis; and

30 (e) Determining when it would be appropriate for the department
31 of children, youth, and families to provide services to a child in
32 crisis as the:

33 (i) Youth meets the definition of a "child who is a candidate for
34 foster care" under RCW 74.13.020;

35 (ii) Youth meets the definition of "dependent child" under RCW
36 13.34.030(6)(a) based on the child being abandoned; or

37 (iii) Family should be offered a voluntary placement agreement.

38 (4) The rapid care team under this section may provide assistance
39 and support to a child in crisis, or the family of a child in crisis.

1 (5) The following individuals may refer a child in crisis to the
2 rapid care team:

3 (a) A child in crisis themselves;

4 (b) A family member of the child in crisis;

5 (c) An advocate for the child in crisis;

6 (d) An educator;

7 (e) A law enforcement officer;

8 (f) An employee of the department of children, youth, and
9 families;

10 (g) An employee of the department of social and health services;

11 (h) An employee of the health care authority;

12 (i) A service provider contracting with the department of
13 children, youth, and families;

14 (j) A service provider contracting with the department of social
15 and health services;

16 (k) A behavioral health service provider;

17 (l) A representative of a managed care organization;

18 (m) A representative from a youth behavioral health or inpatient
19 navigator team;

20 (n) A person providing health care services to the child in
21 crisis; or

22 (o) A hospital employee.

23 (6) (~~By November 1, 2023, the governor shall provide an initial~~
24 ~~report to the legislature describing the process of developing and~~
25 ~~implementing the rapid care team created under this section, and must~~
26 ~~include a projection of when the rapid care team process will be~~
27 ~~implemented. By November 1, 2024, the~~) The governor shall provide
28 ((~~a final~~)) an annual report to the legislature including data and
29 recommendations related to the rapid care team created in this
30 section. The report required under this subsection must be submitted
31 in compliance with RCW 43.01.036. The report required under this
32 subsection must include the following:

33 (a) The number of children in crisis referred to the rapid care
34 team and the types of people making referrals to the rapid care team;

35 (b) The demographic data of the children in crisis served by the
36 rapid care team;

37 (c) The types of services and living arrangements identified by
38 the rapid care team;

1 (d) The availability of the services and living arrangements
2 identified as needed for the children in crisis served by the rapid
3 care team;

4 (e) Any barriers that are preventing children in crisis from
5 safely exiting the hospital setting when there is not a medical need
6 for that hospital stay;

7 (f) Any barriers that are preventing children in crisis who are
8 dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW from maintaining an appropriate and
9 stable placement;

10 (g) Recommendations for earlier intervention to prevent children
11 from becoming children in crisis;

12 (h) Discussion regarding the implementation of youth behavioral
13 health and inpatient navigator programs and their role in serving
14 children in crisis; and

15 (i) Recommendations for systemic changes that could replace the
16 rapid care team in addressing complex cases involving a child in
17 crisis.

18 (7) The following definitions apply to this section:

19 (a) "Child in crisis" means a person under age 18 who is:

20 (i) At risk of remaining in a hospital without medical necessity,
21 without the ability to return to the care of a parent, and not
22 dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW;

23 (ii) Staying in a hospital without medical necessity and who is
24 unable to return to the care of a parent but is not dependent under
25 chapter 13.34 RCW; or

26 (iii) Dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW, experiencing placement
27 instability, and referred to the rapid care team by the department of
28 children, youth, and families.

29 (b) "Rapid care team" means a team, whose work is managed and
30 directed by the children and youth multisystem care (~~coordinator~~)
31 project director created under this section, working to quickly
32 identify the appropriate services and living arrangements for a child
33 in crisis. A rapid care team must include:

34 (i) One designee from the health care authority;

35 (ii) One designee from the department of social and health
36 services;

37 (iii) One designee from the office of financial management;

38 (iv) One designee from the developmental disabilities
39 administration of the department of social and health services;

1 (v) One designee from the department of children, youth, and
2 families; and

3 (vi) Any other entities, including governmental entities and
4 managed care organizations, or individuals, including clinicians and
5 other service providers, that the children and youth multisystem care
6 (~~coordinator~~) project director deems appropriate to support a child
7 in crisis.

8 (8) This section expires June 30, (~~(2025)~~) 2027.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** This act is necessary for the immediate
10 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
11 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
12 effect immediately.

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