
Ways & Means Committee

HB 2139

Brief Description: Concerning the establishment of new regional support network boundaries.

Sponsors: Representatives Cody and Hunter; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the Department of Social and Health Services' (Department) authority to change regional support network (RSN) boundaries to include situations in which an RSN is unable to meet its legal or contractual obligations, a change is necessary to meet legal requirements, or if the Department determines that new boundaries would produce greater efficiency or effectiveness.
- Reduces the number of RSNs from between eight to 14 to a maximum of six by January 1, 2013.

Hearing Date: 12/6/11

Staff: Andy Toulon (786-7178).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) is the designated state mental health authority. The Department contracts with Regional Support Networks (RSNs) to oversee the delivery of mental health services for adults and children who suffer from mental illness or severe emotional disturbance. Entities that are selected to operate as the RSN for a designated geographic area must meet regulatory and contractual standards. In cases in which an RSN fails to meet state minimum standards or refuses to exercise its statutory and contractual obligations, the Department must assume those responsibilities.

An RSN must be either a county authority or group of county authorities except in circumstances in which an existing RSN chooses not to respond to a request for qualifications, is unable to substantially meet the requirements of a request for qualifications, or notifies the Department that

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it will no longer serve as a RSN. Under these circumstances, the Department is required to utilize a procurement process in which other entities recognized by the secretary may bid to serve as the RSN. The Department has authority to establish new boundaries in cases where an RSN fails to respond to or meet standards of a request for qualifications or subsequent re-procurement.

There are currently 13 RSNs in Washington. Twelve of these entities are either single or multi-county authorities and there is one private entity operating as a RSN in Pierce County. RSNs sub-contract with an array of community mental health agencies to provide required services.

Summary of Bill:

The authority of the Department of Social and Health Services (Department) to establish new regional support network (RSN) boundaries only in specific cases related to requests for qualifications or reprocurements is eliminated. The authority of the Department to establish new RSN boundaries is expanded to include circumstances in which (1) an RSN is unable to meet its legal or contractual obligations, (2) a change is required to meet new legal requirements, or (3) the Department determines that changes to the boundaries would produce greater efficiency or effectiveness.

The required number of RSNs is reduced from between eight and 14 to a maximum of six by January 1, 2013. The limit on a single entity being responsible for more than three RSNs is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on November 30, 2011.

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