

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1187

As of March 23, 1995

Title: An act relating to state government organization.

Brief Description: Dividing the department of social and health services into five agencies.

Sponsors: House Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Representatives Reams, Fuhrman, Van Luven, Stevens, Carrell, Campbell, Thompson, Blanton, Boldt, Koster, Sheahan and Huff).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 3/28/95, 3/29/95.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was established in 1970. It was created by merging the former Department of Health, Department of Public Assistance, Department of Institutions, the Veterans' Rehabilitation Council, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Coordinating Council on Occupational Education. DSHS was designed to "integrate and coordinate all those activities involving provision of care for individuals who, as a result of their economic, social or health condition, require financial assistance, institutional care, rehabilitation, or other social and health services."

In 1981, the Department of Corrections (DOC) was established. The responsibilities of DSHS for adult correctional programs and institutions were transferred to DOC at that time. In 1989, the Department of Health was established. The responsibilities of DSHS for programs relating to public health, personal health, environmental health, parent and child health, and other health services were transferred to the Department of Health.

In the 1993-95 biennium, DSHS programs accounted for approximately 24.8 percent of the \$16.3 billion state general fund budget. The total operating budget of DSHS in the 1993-95 biennium, including federal and other funds, was \$9.1 billion. DSHS currently has approximately 16,500 full time employees. According to the department, DSHS provides services to approximately one million people per year, 47 percent of whom are children under the age of 18.

The executive head of DSHS is the Secretary of Social and Health Services. The secretary is required to appoint a deputy secretary, a department personnel director, and such assistant secretaries as needed, including an assistant secretary for juvenile rehabilitation. The secretary is responsible for dividing the department into divisions, including a division of vocational rehabilitation, that are approved by the Governor.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is abolished effective September 15, 1996. Four new state agencies are created from the divisions within DSHS: The Department of Income and Medical Assistance; the Department of Long-Term Care; the Department of Children, Youth, and Family Services; and the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. The executive division of DSHS, including the Office of the Secretary, is eliminated.

By July 1, 1995, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Governor appoint a Committee on the Restructuring of DSHS. The seven member committee consists of: (1) The Speaker or the Speaker's designee; (2) four other members of the House of Representatives, two from each political party, appointed by the Speaker; and (3) two ex officio nonvoting members representing the Office of Financial Management and DSHS, appointed by the Governor. The committee is directed to divide the existing functions and responsibilities of DSHS into the new departments, or propose another method of restructuring the department into separate agencies. The committee is directed to submit proposed legislation implementing its recommendations to the 1996 Legislature. The Senate and the Governor appoint a similar Senate committee that has the same responsibilities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect September 15, 1996, except for Sections 503 and 504 which take effect immediately.