

***Children & Family Services
Committee***

SSB 5417

Brief Description: *Changing provisions relating to opiate substitution treatment programs.*

Sponsors: *By Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Patterson, Long, Hargrove, Stevens, Kline and Winsley).*

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- *Counties and cities must be consulted by the state in the control and regulation of opiate substitution treatment programs.*
- *The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must consider a variety of factors in deciding whether to certify a treatment program.*
- *The department must report annually regarding the numbers of people enrolled in each program, the number who leave each program, and an outcome analysis of each program.*

Hearing Date: *3/22/01*

Staff: *Deborah Frazier (786-7152).*

Background:

Methadone and other opiates are Schedule II controlled substances under state law, meaning the substance has high potential for abuse, but the substance also has currently accepted medical use. Methadone and other opiate substitutes are also highly regulated at the federal level.

Opiate substitutes are used to treat individuals with heroin addiction. Under current law, treatment programs are certified by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to administer methadone, and caseloads are limited to 350 persons per program. Counties have the authority to prohibit treatment programs. Physicians are not authorized to

dispense opiate substitutes within their own individual practices for heroin addiction.

Certified treatment programs have been in place in Washington for more than 25 years. Clinics are currently operating at 11 sites in four counties. Six clinics and one mobile unit serve King County. Pierce County has two clinics; Spokane and Yakima counties each have one clinic. Residents of Clark County are served by a treatment program in Portland, Oregon.

These programs served approximately 4,300 persons in fiscal year 2000, of which 2,056 were publicly funded. Program expenditures totaled \$5.0 million, of which \$1.8 million was state funds. Waiting lists range from one week to six months for publicly funded slots. An estimated 38,000 Washington residents are addicted to heroin.

Summary of Bill:

The bill replaces the term "methadone and other like pharmacological drugs" with "opiate substitution drugs".

Counties and cities must be consulted by the state in the control and regulation of opiate substitution treatment programs. DSHS must consider a variety of factors in deciding whether to certify a treatment program, including:

- that the program will be sited in accordance with county or city land use ordinances;*
- the size of the population in need of treatment and the availability of other certified programs near the area;*
- the transportation systems that would provide service to the program; and*
- the capability to provide the appropriate services to meet goals established by the Legislature. These goals include abstinence from opiates and opiate substitutes, obtaining mental health treatment, improving economic independence, and reducing adverse consequences associated with illegal use of controlled substances.*

The department must hold at least one public hearing in the county where the treatment program is proposed to be located, and at least one public hearing in the area defined as "adjacent or near to" that county.

The department must report annually to the Legislature and Governor regarding the numbers of people enrolled in each program, the number who leave each program, and an outcome analysis of each program.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Preliminary fiscal note available.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*