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SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5749

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Darneille, Frockt, Kuderer, Warnick, and Saldaña)

READ FIRST TIME 02/24/17.

1 AN ACT Relating to paperwork reduction in order to improve the  
2 availability of mental health services to protect children and  
3 families; adding a new section to chapter 71.24 RCW; creating new  
4 sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that a prioritized  
7 recommendation of the children's mental health work group, as  
8 reported in December 2016, is to reduce burdensome and duplicative  
9 paperwork requirements for providers of children's mental health  
10 services. This recommendation is consistent with the recommendations  
11 of the behavioral health workforce assessment of the workforce  
12 training and education coordinating board to reduce time-consuming  
13 documentation requirements and the behavioral and primary health  
14 regulatory alignment task force to streamline regulations and reduce  
15 the time spent responding to inefficient and excessive audits.

16 The legislature further finds that duplicative and overly  
17 prescriptive documentation and audit requirements negatively impact  
18 the adequacy of the provider network by reducing workforce morale and  
19 limiting the time available for patient care. Such requirements  
20 create costly barriers to the efficient provision of services for

1 children and their families. These barriers can be reduced while  
2 creating a greater emphasis on quality, outcomes, and safety.

3 The legislature further finds that social workers serving  
4 children are encumbered by burdensome paperwork requirements which  
5 can interfere with the effective delivery of services.

6 Therefore, the legislature intends to require the department of  
7 social and health services to take steps to reduce paperwork,  
8 documentation, and audit requirements that are inefficient or  
9 duplicative for social workers who serve children and for providers  
10 of mental health services to children and families.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 71.24  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
14 specific purpose, rules adopted by the department relating to the  
15 provision of behavioral health services must:

16 (a) Limit prescriptive requirements for individual initial  
17 assessments to allow clinicians to exercise professional judgment to  
18 conduct age-appropriate, strength-based psychosocial assessments,  
19 including current needs and relevant history according to current  
20 best practices;

21 (b) By October 1, 2017, provide a single set of regulations for  
22 agencies to follow that provide mental health, substance use  
23 disorder, and co-occurring treatment services; and

24 (c) Be clear and not unduly burdensome in order to maximize the  
25 time available for the provision of care.

26 (2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
27 specific purpose, audits conducted by the department relating to  
28 provision of behavioral health services must:

29 (a) Rely on a sampling methodology to conduct reviews of  
30 personnel files and clinical records based on written guidelines  
31 established by the department that are consistent with the standards  
32 of other licensing and accrediting bodies;

33 (b) Treat organizations with multiple locations as a single  
34 entity. The department must not require annual visits at all  
35 locations operated by a single entity when a sample of records may be  
36 reviewed from a centralized location;

37 (c) Share audit results with behavioral health organizations to  
38 assist with their review process and, when appropriate, take steps to  
39 coordinate and combine audit activities;

1 (d) Coordinate audit functions between the department and the  
2 department of health to combine audit activities into a single site  
3 visit and eliminate redundancies;

4 (e) Not require information to be provided in particular  
5 documents or locations when the same information is included or  
6 demonstrated elsewhere in the clinical file, except where required by  
7 federal law; and

8 (f) Ensure that audits involving manualized programs such as  
9 wraparound with intensive services or other evidence or research-  
10 based programs are conducted to the extent practicable by personnel  
11 familiar with the program model and in a manner consistent with the  
12 documentation requirements of the program.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
14 appropriated for this specific purpose: The department of social and  
15 health services must immediately perform a review of casework  
16 documentation and paperwork requirements for social workers with the  
17 department who provide services to children. The review must identify  
18 areas in which duplicative or inefficient documentation and paperwork  
19 requirements can be eliminated or streamlined in order to allow  
20 social workers to spend greater amounts of time and attention on  
21 direct services to children and their families. The department must  
22 complete the review by November 1, 2017. Upon completion of the  
23 review, the department must take immediate steps to amend department  
24 rules and procedures accordingly.

25 (2) This section expires December 31, 2018.

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