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SENATE BILL 5970

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State of Washington                      65th Legislature      2017 3rd Special Session

By Senators Frockt, Saldaña, O'Ban, and Palumbo

Read first time 06/29/17. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1            AN ACT Relating to the crisis intervention response team pilot  
2 project; adding new sections to chapter 43.101 RCW; creating a new  
3 section; and providing expiration dates.

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

5            NEW SECTION.      **Sec. 1.**    The legislature recognizes the need to  
6 address the impact of behavioral health crises on individuals,  
7 communities, and state and local institutions. By virtue of their  
8 position, law enforcement officers are often the first called to  
9 respond to or assist individuals experiencing a behavioral health  
10 crisis. The legislature recognizes that law enforcement has made  
11 efforts to respond appropriately to such calls through crisis  
12 intervention training and other measures focused on behavioral  
13 health. However, violent interactions between persons in crisis and  
14 law enforcement remain an issue of significant state and national  
15 concern. While crisis intervention training and techniques are  
16 critical to reducing violence and harm, there is no substitute for  
17 the experience and skills of licensed mental health professionals.  
18 Results from new programs used in other states demonstrate that  
19 partnerships between law enforcement and mental health professionals  
20 improve outcomes for safety and also address the needs of those in  
21 crisis. Accordingly, the legislature hereby establishes the crisis

1 intervention response team pilot project to deploy law enforcement  
2 and mental health professionals as partners in the field. The  
3 allocation of grant funds will facilitate the implementation of this  
4 innovative approach, and also create an opportunity to measure  
5 possible outcomes through a study conducted by the Washington state  
6 institute for public policy. The legislature aims to foster peaceful  
7 resolution to volatile situations, and ultimately save taxpayer  
8 dollars, by directly acknowledging and addressing behavioral health  
9 crises with the combined efforts and expertise of law enforcement and  
10 mental health professionals.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.101  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
14 specific purpose, the crisis intervention response team pilot project  
15 is created within the commission. The purpose of the project is to  
16 create crisis intervention response teams composed of qualified law  
17 enforcement and mental health professionals to respond  
18 professionally, humanely, and safely to crises involving persons with  
19 behavioral health issues.

20 (2)(a) The commission shall award two grants, one to an eligible  
21 applicant west of the crest of the Cascade mountains and one to an  
22 eligible applicant east of the crest of the Cascade mountains.

23 (b) Eligible applicants include law enforcement agencies with: A  
24 need for crisis intervention professionals for responding to calls  
25 for service in the field; a commitment to improving crisis  
26 intervention through modifying or expanding upon law enforcement  
27 practices; and a commitment to partnering with mental health  
28 professionals. In evaluating grant applications, the commission shall  
29 consult with the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs  
30 and behavioral health organizations. Grants must be reviewed and  
31 awarded through peer review panels.

32 (c) Grant recipients must be selected and receiving funds no  
33 later than June 30, 2018.

34 (3) Grant recipients must:

35 (a) Establish at least four and no more than twelve crisis  
36 intervention response teams with grant funds;

37 (b) Include on each crisis intervention team one experienced law  
38 enforcement officer who has completed enhanced crisis intervention  
39 training under RCW 43.101.427 and one person designated as a mental

1 health professional by the department of social and health services  
2 who has completed training under section 3 of this act; the officer  
3 and mental health professional must be assigned as partners and  
4 patrol together;

5 (c) Use crisis intervention teams to: (i) Assist law enforcement  
6 officers with service calls necessitating crisis intervention; (ii)  
7 conduct proactive and follow-up investigations related to crisis  
8 intervention; (iii) appropriately corespond to calls involving  
9 special weapons and tactics teams or other enhanced teams; (iv)  
10 directly lead and handle the agency's most serious crisis  
11 intervention calls; and (v) where appropriate, educate and train  
12 other officers in the agency on best practices for crisis  
13 intervention.

14 (4) The commission shall:

15 (a) Adopt policies and procedures necessary to administer the  
16 project, including for evaluating and selecting grant recipients,  
17 monitoring use of grant funds, and collecting and evaluating data to  
18 assess the effectiveness of the project;

19 (b) Consult with the Washington state institute for public policy  
20 to establish data collection and reporting guidelines for grant  
21 recipients in order for the institute to conduct the study under  
22 section 4 of this act; and

23 (c) Consult with the department of social and health services to  
24 develop requirements for mental health professionals participating in  
25 the project.

26 (5) The commission shall submit an annual report to the governor  
27 and appropriate committees of the legislature on the project,  
28 including information on selected grant recipients, use of funds,  
29 number of teams, and an assessment and input by the commission and  
30 grant recipients, by December 1st of each year the project is funded.

31 (6) This section expires July 1, 2022.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.101  
33 RCW to read as follows:

34 (1) The commission shall provide training for mental health  
35 professionals participating in the crisis intervention response team  
36 pilot project under section 2 of this act.

37 (2) The commission shall develop and provide training necessary  
38 for mental health professionals to operate successfully and  
39 competently as part of crisis intervention response teams. The

1 training must provide the professionals with a working knowledge of  
2 law enforcement procedures and tools sufficient to provide for the  
3 safety of the professionals, partnered law enforcement officers, and  
4 members of the public.

5 (3) All mental health professionals participating in the project  
6 must complete the training under this section prior to operating in  
7 the field with a crisis intervention response team, unless the  
8 commission provides a written waiver to the professional. A written  
9 waiver may only be provided if the professional demonstrates a full  
10 understanding and competency of the training materials and  
11 curriculum.

12 (4) The commission shall provide the training required in this  
13 section, together with facilities, supplies, materials, and the room  
14 and board for noncommuting attendees.

15 (5) This section expires July 1, 2022.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.101  
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) The Washington state institute for public policy, in  
19 consultation with the commission, shall develop data collection and  
20 reporting guidelines for the commission to require of grant  
21 recipients under section 2 of this act. The institute shall conduct a  
22 study on whether the use of crisis intervention response teams  
23 improves outcomes of interactions with persons experiencing  
24 behavioral health crises, including reducing rates of violence and  
25 harm and other measurable effects identified by the institute.

26 (2) This section expires July 1, 2022.

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