

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1765

As Reported By House Committee On:
Corrections

Title: An act relating to a corrections mental health center operated through a partnership of the department of corrections and the University of Washington.

Brief Description: Creating a corrections mental health center operated through a partnership of the department of corrections and the University of Washington.

Sponsors: Representatives L. Johnson, Morris, Long, Cooke, Dellwo, Mastin, Thibaudeau, Campbell, Riley, Johanson, Karahalios, Eide, J. Kohl, Springer and Leonard.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Corrections, March 3, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Mastin, Vice Chair; Long, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; G. Cole; L. Johnson; Ogden; Riley; and Padden.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background: Sentences for mentally ill offenders are established by the courts according to the severity of the crime and the offender's prior criminal history. The Department of Corrections does not have authority to set or modify special terms of incarceration or community supervision for a mentally ill offender.

No comprehensive and centralized rehabilitative mental health offender program currently exists within the Department of Corrections. The assistance that is provided to the incarcerated mentally ill offender are facility specific and depend on the capacity of the medical and counseling staff and the constraints of the facility.

However, the Department of Corrections Division of Community Corrections has the limited capacity to accommodate both

mentally ill offenders and the developmentally disabled. Within the division, the structure for serving mentally ill and developmentally disabled offenders includes designated work release facilities such as Lincoln Park/Rap House and, to a limited degree, other work release facilities and field offices in communities throughout the state. Staff at Lincoln Park/Rap House receive specialized training in managing mentally ill and developmentally disabled offenders. Community corrections officers are trained in managing mentally ill and developmentally disabled offenders, including: identification of decompensation, familiarity with commonly used medications and their side effects, case management and referral procedures, and intervention techniques. The division receives offenders who have served time in prison and require transitional services, supervision, and support as they reintegrate into the community.

Currently, there are approximately 1,500 offenders in Department of Corrections facilities who have been diagnosed to have a major mental illness.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Corrections and the University of Washington, through its Institute of Public Policy and Management, are required to develop a collaborative arrangement to establish a mental health center at McNeil Island Corrections Center. A requirement of the collaborative arrangement is the establishment of an advisory panel of key stakeholders drawn from a broad array of corrections, community advocacy, law enforcement, mental health, and criminal justice interest groups. Together, the Stakeholder Advisory Panel, the University of Washington, and the Department of Corrections are required to develop a strategic plan for the center that will address the following program objectives: to develop new and innovative treatment approaches; improve the quality of services within the prisons; address the need for prevention and reintegration strategies for the mentally ill offender when he or she is released; facilitate mental health staff recruitment and training requirements; expand treatment services research for the Department of Corrections and the entire correctional system; develop organizational models and training for mental health professionals; improve the working environment for correctional employees; strengthen the multi-disciplinary collaborations between the appropriate departments within the University of Washington, the public health sector, community mental health system, and local jails; develop a working coalition of mental health professionals in this field; and design and develop a comprehensive coordinated continuum of mental health care from entry in prison until the mentally ill individual is transitioned back to the outside community.

The University of Washington is responsible for conducting research, training, and treatment activities for the mentally ill offender at the center. The Department of Corrections is specifically responsible for all aspects of the center that involve the offender's housing, care, and supervision. Other state colleges, universities and mental health providers can be involved with the center's activities on a subcontract basis. The mentally ill offenders sent to the center are selected based on the offenders' needs, the availability of services, and other department considerations.

The Department of Corrections is required to report annually to the Legislature on the attainment of the center's goals.

An emergency is declared.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Both the intent and scope of the act are expanded to address the need for prevention and reintegration strategies as they relate to the research, coordination, and evaluation effort conducted at the center. The Department of Corrections and the University of Washington are required to enter into a collaborative arrangement as opposed to a partnership. Under the collaborative arrangement a stakeholder's advisory panel must be established to assist in completing program objectives. Additions are made to the range of groups that participate in the centers activities. Emphasis is made to include advocacy groups and the community mental health network. The center's objectives are clarified and expanded to include the reintegration of mentally ill offenders and the inappropriate incarceration of the mentally ill. The responsibilities of the Department of Corrections and the University of Washington are clarified.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 8, 1993.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This center will assist the Department of Corrections to manage these type of offenders in an appropriate setting and allow the department to work in a cooperative fashion to more adequately develop a long-range treatment strategy for all mentally ill offenders.

Testimony Against: It falls short of addressing the mental health needs of mentally ill offenders in a community-based setting. Transition and reintegration of these offenders are important.

Witnesses: Representative L. Johnson, prime sponsor; Ruben Cedeno, Department of Corrections (pro); Kit Bail, ISRB (pro); David Hanig, Department of Social and Health Services (pro); Bob Edie, Betty Jane Narver, Eric Trupin and David Allen, University of Washington (pro); Dave Stewart and Susan Rotenberg, CAMIO/Pierce County (con); and Keith Eggen, AMI-Thurston/Mason County (pro).