
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2114

Brief Description: Providing for funding of programs for family preservation and intervention services.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi and Dickerson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a new funding system for family preservation and intervention services throughout the state.

Hearing Date: 3/3/03

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

The Children's Administration (CA) in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers, through contracts, the following services in support of families that are involved with the CA:

- Alternative Response System (ARS) provides services to low-risk families referred to Child Protective Services (CPS). Services help families develop community support systems to keep children safe and families intact without intrusive CPS intervention. ARS serves families whose CPS referrals are determined to be low risk or moderately low risk at intake or after investigation. Priority is given to families who have one or more of the risk factors that research has shown to best predict the likelihood of re-referral;
- Continuum of Care (COC) provides early intervention services to low-risk families. Services are designed to be appropriate, accessible, and sensitive to the population served. COC involves local communities, schools, private entities, and state agencies in assessment and planning of services;
- Family Preservation Services (FPS) are available to families whose children face substantial likelihood of being placed outside of the home or to reunify children with their families from out-of-home care. FPS are available to families within 48 hours of referral and are offered for a maximum of six months. FPS are designed to support families by

- strengthening their relationships with a variety of community resources; and
- Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) are available to families whose children the DSHS believes are at imminent risk of foster care placement. IFPS are voluntary services that provide up to 20 hours of in-home therapist time each week, for about a 40-day period of time. Services are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Interventions are focused on improving the ability of the family to overcome a crisis situation and to remain together safely.

Summary of Bill:

Funding previously provided for the Alternative Response System, Continuum of Care, Family Preservation Services, and Intensive Family Preservation Services must be combined. The combined funds must be allocated through a request for proposal issued by the DSHS for the provision of family preservation and intervention services in the state.

Each proposal must be for a program that meets the following criteria:

- defines clear, measurable outcomes;
- is research-based;
- can demonstrate its anticipated cost-effectiveness;
- can demonstrate broad community involvement, support, and partnerships; and
- conducts an evaluation of its program outcomes.

Each proposal must clearly demonstrate collaboration with the appropriate regional office of the DSHS and outline agreements with the regional office regarding referrals to the proposed program and a joint approach to addressing the needs of families.

There is established a Family Preservation and Intervention Services Panel (Panel) convened by the DSHS. The Panel is required to review and rate all proposals for family preservation and intervention services throughout the state solicited by the DSHS and be responsible for the allocation of the funds appropriated for this purpose. Funds must be allocated to assure an equitable distribution of resources among regions.

The membership of the Panel must consist of 11 members, appointed by the Secretary of the DSHS, who shall include: individuals with expertise in research on effective family preservation and intervention services; individuals with expertise in community-based provision of family preservation and intervention services, for whom membership on the panel does not involve a conflict of interest; representatives of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy; and representatives of the DSHS, including regional office representatives.

Reasonable expenses of the panel, including staffing and travel expenses, shall be paid for with moneys appropriated for the funding of family preservation and intervention services.

In addition to the general criteria provided, the Panel is required to establish criteria identifying specific outcomes that a program must demonstrate its ability to meet, such as a reduction in any one or more of the following: child abuse and neglect, out-of-home placement, re-referrals to child protective services, family conflict, and behavioral problems in children who are in out-of-home care.

The Panel is required to report to the Legislature on the funded programs. The report must include, at a minimum, the following information for each program: the amount of funding provided, the number of individuals served, and an evaluation of the outcomes.

Appropriation: The sum of \$21,317,000.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.