
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 1663

Brief Description: Creating the prevention and intervention investment council.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Dickerson, Darneille, Walsh, Roberts, McDonald, Pettigrew, McIntire, Tom, Hunter, Nixon, Clibborn, Santos, Rodne, Kenney and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Prevention and Intervention Investment Council (Council).
- Requires that 20 percent of state spending for identified current child welfare programs be spent on evidence-based prevention and intervention programs identified by the Council.

Hearing Date: February 10, 2005.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

As part of the 2003-05 state operating budget, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) was required to conduct research concerning the benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention programs for children and youth. The WSIPP was required to:

- review research assessing the effectiveness of prevention and early intervention programs concerning children and youth, including, but not limited to, programs designed to reduce the at-risk behaviors for children and youth identified in state law, and identify specific research-proven programs that produce a positive return on the dollar compared to the costs of the program;
- develop criteria designed to ensure quality implementation and program fidelity of research-proven programs in the state, including measures for ongoing monitoring and continual improvement of treatment delivery; and
- develop recommendations for potential state legislation that encourages local government investment in research-proven prevention and early intervention programs by reimbursing local governments for a portion of the savings that accrue to the state as the result of local investments in such programs.

The WSIPP report, which was completed in September 2004, concluded that certain well-implemented prevention and early intervention programs for youth can achieve significantly

more benefits than costs, and that taxpayers will be better off if investments are made in these successful research-based programs. The WSIPP report also found the following:

- Some prevention and early intervention programs fail to generate more benefits than costs, and would be an inefficient use of taxpayer money.
- The market for rigorously researched prevention and early intervention programs is young, but is evolving quickly. Most high-quality evaluations have been completed only in the last two decades, and many new rigorous studies will become available in the years ahead.
- While Washington has taken significant steps in recent years, many currently funded prevention and early intervention programs in the state have not been rigorously evaluated. Thus, for many programs in Washington, there is insufficient evidence at this time to determine whether they produce positive or negative returns for taxpayers.

Based on these findings, the WSIPP concluded that in order to ensure the best possible return for Washington taxpayers the Legislature and Governor should:

- invest in research-proven "blue chip" prevention and early intervention programs, with most of the state's prevention portfolio spent on these proven programs;
avoid spending money on programs where there is little evidence of program effectiveness;
- keep abreast of the latest research-based findings from around the United States to determine where there are opportunities to use taxpayer dollars wisely;
- embark on a strategy to evaluate Washington's currently funded programs to determine if benefits exceed costs;
- pay close attention to quality control and adherence to original program designs; and
- consider developing a strategy to encourage local government investment in research-proven programs.

Summary of Bill:

Prevention and Intervention Investment Council

The Prevention and Intervention Investment Council (Council) is created to direct and support the following:

- the investment of state resources in evidence-based prevention and intervention programs in the state; and
- ongoing research and evaluation of sound, theory-based prevention and intervention programs with the goal of expanding the number and type of available evidence-based programs.

In conducting its work, the Council must consult a broad range of available research, including research conducted by the WSIPP on prevention and early intervention programs.

The Council is to consist of the following nine members:

- the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services and the Director of the Office of Financial Management;
- three individuals appointed by the Governor, two of whom must be researchers; and
- two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom must be a member of the majority caucus and one of whom must be a member of the minority caucus, and two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, one of whom must be a member of the majority caucus and one of whom must be a member of the minority caucus.

Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Programs

The Council is required to develop and maintain a defined menu of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs that have been demonstrated to achieve significantly more benefits than costs with respect to the two following outcomes:

- reduction in child abuse; and
- reduction in child neglect.

The Council is also required to develop guidelines for implementation of the identified programs, which address quality control, adherence to program design, monitoring, and evaluation.

By July 1, 2006, the Council is required to identify additional outcomes for which it must develop and maintain defined menus of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs that have been demonstrated to achieve significantly more benefits than costs with respect to those outcomes.

Twenty percent of state spending for Alternate Response Systems, Family Preservation Services, and Early Intervention Public Health Nurse Services must be spent on evidence-based prevention and intervention programs identified by the Council to achieve significantly more benefits than costs in reducing child abuse and reducing child neglect. This funding must be limited to spending for services to families involved with the child welfare system.

Existing state entities that support prevention and intervention programs, including but not limited to the Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, the Family Policy Council, and the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, are required to focus on funding sound, theory-based prevention and intervention programs with the goal of expanding the number and type of available evidence-based programs. These state entities must coordinate their activities with the activities of the Council.

Further Duties of the Council

The Council is to employ an executive director who is exempt from the provisions of the state Civil Service law. The council may fix the compensation of the executive director. The executive director may employ such other staff as are necessary to carry out the purposes of the bill.

The Council must create a Prevention and Intervention Investment Work Group to provide technical support to the Council.

Members of the Council must be compensated as a class three group and reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with state law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 1, 2005.

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