

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1816

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, Mental Health & Housing, March 22, 2017

Title: An act relating to information sharing regarding implementation the homeless youth prevention and protection act of 2015.

Brief Description: Concerning information sharing related to implementation of the homeless youth prevention and protection act of 2015.

Sponsors: House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Frame, Goodman, Lovick, Ortiz-Self, Kilduff, Muri, Doglio, Macri and Fey; by request of Department of Social and Health Services).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/17, 96-2.

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 3/20/17, 3/22/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the Department of Social and Health Services to disclose confidential child welfare records to the Department of Commerce for youth admitted to crisis residential centers (CRC) or HOPE centers.
- Modifies certain administrative responsibilities related to CRCs and HOPE centers.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators O'Ban, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Darneille, Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Hunt, Padden and Walsh.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

Background: In 2015, the Legislature created the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs (OHY) at the Department of Commerce (Commerce). Upon the creation of the OHY, programs serving homeless and unaccompanied youth, including crisis residential centers (CRC) and HOPE centers, were transferred from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to the Commerce.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Crisis Residential Centers. A CRC is a short-term secure or semi-secure facility providing a temporary residence for runaway youth and adolescents ages 12-17 in conflict with their families. Counselors at a CRC work with the family to resolve the immediate conflict and may refer the family for additional services. At the request of the child or parent, a CRC administrator may convene a multidisciplinary team to assist with coordination and delivery of services to the family. A stay at a CRC cannot exceed 15 calendar days, or 5 days for a juvenile detention based CRC. CRC administrators are to determine, by rule, the hours a youth may come and go from the facility. The Administrator of a CRC is to notify parents, law enforcement, and DSHS immediately when a child leaves a CRC without permission.

HOPE Centers. HOPE centers provide temporary residence and services for street youth under the age of 18. Youth residing in a HOPE center receive a comprehensive assessment that may include referrals and permanency planning. A youth may stay in a HOPE Center for up to 30 calendar days. A HOPE Center can extend a stay which cannot exceed 60 calendar days. HOPE center administrators accompany a resident leaving the HOPE center to attend school or other necessary appointments.

Street youth means a person under the age of 18 who lives outdoors or in another unsafe location not intended for occupancy by the minor and who is not residing with the minor's parent or at the minor's legally authorized residence.

Summary of Bill: Confidential Child Welfare Records. The DSHS may disclose confidential child welfare records for youth in foster care to Commerce and its contracted providers. Records may be disclosed for the purpose of ensuring the safety and welfare of foster youth who are admitted to CRCs and HOPE centers under contract with the Office. Records used for these purposes must remain confidential and may not be disclosed further by the Commerce and its contractors.

Notification to the DSHS regarding: (1) law enforcement's transport of a child to a CRC; and (2) unauthorized leave from a CRC by a child, is only required in cases where the child is in the care of or receiving services from the DSHS Children's Administration.

Responsibility for adopting rules related to CRC licensing are transferred from Commerce to the DSHS, and language is clarified to update the terms secretary and department to reference the DSHS with respect to rules and licensing for CRC and HOPE centers. Responsibility for requesting state agency participation on multidisciplinary teams serving children and parents is transferred from the CRC administrator to Commerce. Commerce must provide information about state agency participation on the team to the CRC administrator. A CRC administrator, rather than the Commerce, may establish rules related to the hours a resident may come and go from a CRC.

The requirement for a HOPE center administrator to accompany a resident leaving the HOPE center to attend school or other necessary appointments is removed. HOPE center administrators may establish rules allowing residents to come and go from the facility at reasonable hours. Administrators may require that a resident leaving the facility:

- be accompanied by a facility administrator or designee; and

- notify the administrator of intent to leave, intended destination, and probable time of return to the facility.

Approval by the DSHS for payment for a HOPE center bed for a dependent youth is no longer required.

For a petition filed in juvenile court by a parent, child, or the Commerce for a child in need of services, the definition is changed to allow the DSHS to file a petition instead of the Commerce.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill is really a number of technical and clarifying changes as a result of the creation of Office of Homeless Youth in 2015 when HOPE beds and CRCs were transferred from DSHS to Commerce. For example, we need to clarify in statute that DSHS can give Commerce otherwise confidential information about a youth referred to a HOPE bed/CRC so the shelter can plan for the placement and the safety of that youth and the other youth in the shelter.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Noel Frame, Prime Sponsor; Jennifer Strus, DSHS.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.