

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6452

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, January 24, 2018

Title: An act relating to expanding the activities of the children's mental health services consultation program.

Brief Description: Expanding the activities of the children's mental health services consultation program.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Frockt, Carlyle, O'Ban, Walsh, Darneille, Miloscia, Kuderer and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/17/18, 1/24/18 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Partnership Access Line (PAL) for Moms and Kids program to expand the activities of PAL to include support for health care professionals who provide care to pregnant women and new mothers.
- Requires PAL for Moms and Kids to assist parents or guardians with making mental health service connections.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Darneille, Chair; Dhingra, Vice Chair; O'Ban, Ranking Member; Carlyle, Frockt, Miloscia and Walsh.

Staff: Keri Waterland (786-7490)

Background: The PAL is a telephone-based child mental health consultation system for primary care providers. PAL is staffed by child psychiatrists affiliated with the University of Washington and Seattle Children's Hospital to deliver its consultation services. PAL has a master's-level social worker that assists with finding mental health resources for patients with any type of insurance—state, private or no insurance. PAL is available to primary care doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants throughout the state of Washington.

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.

PAL provides rapid consultation responses during business hours for any type of mental health issue relevant to a minor patient. PAL supports primary care providers—doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants with questions about mental health care such as diagnostic clarification, medication adjustment, or treatment planning. Child and adolescent psychiatrists are available to consult during business hours. PAL is available to providers caring for any patient in Washington; the consultation program is funded by the Legislature through the Health Care Authority (HCA).

Summary of Bill: To the extent that funds are specifically appropriated for this purpose, HCA must collaborate with the University of Washington Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Seattle Children's Hospital to implement PAL for Moms and Kids.

PAL for Moms and Kids must provide support for obstetricians, pediatricians, primary care providers, mental health professionals, and other health care professionals who provide care to pregnant women and new mothers through same-day telephone consultations in the assessment and provision of appropriate diagnosis and treatment of depression in pregnant women and new mothers.

PAL for Moms and Kids must facilitate referrals to children's mental health services and other resources for parents and guardians with concerns related to the mental health of the parent or guardian's child. Facilitation activities include:

- assessing the level of services needed by the child;
- identifying within seven days of receiving a call from a parent or guardian mental health professionals who are in-network with the child's health care coverage who are accepting new patients and taking appointments;
- coordinating contact between the parent or guardian and the mental health professional; and providing postreferral reviews to determine if the child has outstanding needs.

In conducting its referral activities, PAL for Moms and Kids must collaborate with existing databases and resources to identify in-network mental health professionals.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2018.

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: Mental health services are difficult to find. There was just another teen suicide and we need to do something about services. This system is difficult to navigate and there are many stories of families who need services but do not know where to turn. A provider called 15 different other providers for services and was turned down by all, imagine if this were a parent. The huge barrier is access. This program is borrowed from Massachusetts and England. This bill would add additional staff and team referral providers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sharon Brown, Prime Sponsor; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; Seth Dawson, Washington State Psychiatric Association, Compass Health; Robert Hilt, UW/Seattle Childrens; Kristin Houser, Parent Member, Children's Mental Health Work Group; Ruth Conn, Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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