

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5839

As Reported by House Committee On: Human Services & Early Learning

Title: An act relating to personal care services for homeless seniors and persons with disabilities.

Brief Description: Creating a pilot project to provide personal care services for homeless seniors and persons with disabilities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation (originally sponsored by Senators Darneille, Nguyen, Hasegawa, Palumbo and Wilson, C.).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 3/15/19, 3/22/19 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by Committee)

- Establishes a pilot project to provide personal care services to homeless seniors and persons with disabilities in a homeless shelter.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

Medicaid personal care (MPC) provides assistance with activities of daily living (ADL) to individuals who are assessed by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) as functionally and financially eligible. Functional eligibility requires the person to have an

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unmet need for assistance with certain ADL, but he or she does not require the level of care provided by a hospital, nursing facility, or other similar institution or care facility.

Eligibility for MPC begins on the date the DSHS authorizes services. The MPC services may be delivered in the individual's home, in DSHS-contracted adult family homes, and in licensed assisted living facilities contracted with the DSHS to provide residential care services.

The MPC services can include nursing care coordination and emergency skilled treatment, as well as personal care services. Personal care services mean physical or verbal assistance with ADL and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) due to a person's functional limitations.

The ADL include assistance with bathing, bed mobility, dressing, eating, locomotion, medication management, toilet use, transfer between surfaces such as from a bed to a wheelchair, and personal hygiene. The IADL include meal preparation, housework, essential shopping, and other routine activities.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The DSHS must establish a pilot project to provide personal care services to homeless seniors and persons with disabilities from the time the person presents at a shelter to the time he or she becomes eligible for MPC.

The DSHS must contract with a nonprofit organization that:

- provides personal care services to homeless persons;
- operates a 24-hour homeless shelter; and
- is currently partnering with the DSHS to bring MPC services to homeless seniors and persons with disabilities.

The pilot project must fund two personal care aides at 30 hours per week. The personal care aides must be added to the staff of the homeless shelter operated by the nonprofit organization.

The DSHS must report on pilot project outcomes to the Governor and the Legislature by January 1, 2021. The report must address:

- the number of people served;
- the number of people served who transitioned to MPC;
- the number of people served who found stable housing;
- the number of emergency room visits for pilot project participants in the six months prior to entering the shelter and the number of emergency room visits after beginning to receive services through the pilot project, if available; and
- any additional data and information deemed relevant by the contractor or the DSHS.

The pilot project expires June 30, 2021.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The amended bill extends the due date for the report to the Governor and the Legislature by one month to January 1, 2021, and extends the expiration date of the pilot project by six months to June 30, 2021.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) With this policy, vulnerable seniors and people who are disabled would be engaged when they may be open to receiving services that could change their future. This type of intervention in the shelters could prevent unnecessary hospitalizations. If people are stabilized and linked to services, they can more easily get housed and connect to Medicaid services. There has been an increase in seniors and people with disabilities who are homeless, and people are aging in place in homeless shelters. Under the pilot project, a social worker was put in place a few days a week in a shelter, and the initial results have been amazing, with 15 people leaving homelessness. This bill will allow services to begin the moment the person shows up in a shelter rather than having to wait until they can have the assessment completed.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Darneille, prime sponsor; and Peter Nazzal, Catholic Community Services of Western Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.