

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5546

As of February 21, 2019

Title: An act relating to creating a pilot project to establish an enhanced 211 drug line in certain counties.

Brief Description: Creating a pilot project to establish an enhanced 211 drug line in certain counties.

Sponsors: Senators Conway, Zeiger, Darneille, Fortunato, Becker and Nguyen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 2/20/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Appropriates up to \$350,000 for a 211 drug line pilot project dedicated to the referral for opioid and other drug crisis services in Lewis, Pierce, and Thurston counties.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Staff: LeighBeth Merrick (786-7445)

Background: In 2003, legislation was enacted to create 211 as the official state dialing code for public access to information and referral for health and human services and information about access to services after a disaster. The Washington Information Network (WIN) 211 is a 501(c)(3) corporation that administers the program. WIN 211 awards grants to approved organizations to provide 211 services across the state. Currently, there are eight regional providers.

Summary of Bill: Up to \$350,000 is appropriated to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for an enhanced 211 drug line pilot project that provides residents of Lewis, Pierce, and Thurston counties easy public access to referral for opioid and other drug crisis services. The funds are appropriated from the general fund for the 2019-2021 biennium, and are sufficient for WIN 211 to hire, or provide grants to approved 211 service providers to hire, a technician and two telephone operators.

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.

WIN 211 must create the enhanced 211 drug line, and administer and implement the pilot project in collaboration with approved 211 service providers. DSHS must provide oversight and administrative support for the pilot project, and submit a report by December 1, 2020, to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature about the pilot project and whether or not the project should be continued. No more than 5 percent of the funds appropriated may be used by DSHS for these activities. The pilot project must start August 1, 2019, and end July 1, 2021.

Appropriation: The bill contains an appropriation totaling \$350,000 from the General Fund-State.

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: People should be able to easily access help for drug addiction as soon as they seek it. 211 is the best resource for this and is already working with partners to provide referral to drug treatment services in other counties. 211 funding may be cut and this bill would help restore it.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Steve Conway, Prime Sponsor; Pam Roach, Pierce County Councilperson; Robyn Smith, Director, Recovery Help Line; Nick Federici, WIN 211 Network.

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