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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5074**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Wagoner, Dhingra, and Wilson, C.)

AN ACT Relating to establishing and expanding safe station pilot programs for persons in need of substance use disorder treatment; adding a new section to chapter 41.05 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 70.385 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that the safe station program is a concept that started with successful model programs in the cities of Manchester and Nashua, New Hampshire and has spread throughout New England, including a widespread presence in Rhode Island. Under this act, participating fire departments are designated as safe stations that provide assessment and referral services at their station locations. Alternatively, or in addition, fire departments may have a mobile response unit that responds to requests for assistance in community-based locations. Basic screening is provided by mental health professionals, substance use disorder professionals, licensed practical nurses, paramedics, registered nurses, or emergency medical technicians who are trained to provide a welcoming environment and connect persons to treatment support and services, including transportation to acute medical services when warranted. Safe stations break down barriers for individuals and allow them to interact with support in recovery. Safe stations provide an alternative to emergency rooms and can serve as a diversion for people who need help but are not at the point of crisis.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 41.05 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to appropriation, the authority shall manage a grant program to award funding to fire departments in the state of Washington to implement safe station pilot programs. Programs that combine the safe station approach with fire department mobile integrated health programs such as the community assistance referral and education services program under RCW 35.21.930 are encouraged.

(2) Certified substance use disorder peer specialists may be employed in a safe station pilot program under this section if the authority determines that a plan is in place to provide appropriate levels of supervision and technical support.

(3) Behavioral health administrative services organizations in a region with a safe station pilot program shall collaborate with the safe station program, local crisis providers, and other stakeholders to develop a streamlined process for referring safe station clients to the appropriate level of care.

(4) Funding for pilot programs under this act shall be used for new or expanded programs and may not be used to supplant existing funding.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 70.385 RCW to read as follows:

Certified substance use disorder peer counselors may be employed in the pilot program established under section 2 of this act if the authority determines that a plan is in place to provide appropriate levels of supervision and technical support.

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