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**HOUSE BILL 1242**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Dent, Davis, Ortiz-Self, Doglio, Eslick, and Lekanoff

AN ACT Relating to creating a behavioral health work group to study the root causes of rising behavioral health issues in Washington communities; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The department of health shall convene a work group to study the root causes of rising behavioral health issues in Washington communities. The membership of the work group shall emphasize individuals with actual, practical experience dealing with the behavioral health system and shall include:

(a) Individuals who have received behavioral health services in a variety of settings and circumstances throughout the behavioral health system;

(b) Family members of individuals who have received behavioral health services, including parents;

(c) Behavioral health treatment providers with actual experience providing behavioral health services in various settings, including crisis behavioral health services. Behavioral health treatment providers serving on the work group may not represent, or be employed by, any organizations or interest groups representing the interests of health care providers or behavioral health stakeholders;

(d) Invited tribal representatives with experience providing or receiving behavioral health services from tribal health departments;

(e) Members of the clergy;

(f) Law enforcement officers who have training and experience dealing with individuals with behavioral health conditions or undergoing behavioral health crises;

(g) Behavioral health advocates; and

(h) Any other individuals with actual, practical experience dealing with the behavioral health system deemed appropriate by the department of health.

(2) The work group shall, at a minimum, discuss:

(a) The factors that are leading to increased demand for behavioral health services in Washington;

(b) Methods to address behavioral health workforce shortages;

(c) The current status of Washington's behavioral health system, including the barriers to meeting unmet need and any gaps in the system;

(d) The effectiveness of the state's integrated care initiative in terms of access for the seriously mentally ill, reductions in hospitalization and institutionalization, improvements in community-based care, and support for an effective network of community-based care providers for the seriously mentally ill; and

(e) Any other suggestions for improving the behavioral health system.

(3) The work group shall submit a progress report to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature no later than December 15, 2023. The work group shall submit its findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature no later than November 15, 2024.

(4) This section expires January 1, 2025.

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