

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1550

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Human Services*

**Title:** An act relating to mental health.

**Brief Description:** Providing for early intervention and prevention projects.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Phillips, Holland, Leonard, Winsley, Riley, Peery, Sprenkle, Cole, Nelson, Locke, G. Fisher, Pruitt, Rust, Rasmussen, Dorn, H. Myers, Jones, Valle, Rayburn, Dellwo, Jacobsen, Fraser, Sheldon, Roland and Anderson.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Human Services, March 6, 1991, DPS.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**Majority Report:** *That Substitute House Bill No. 1550 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*  
Signed by 10 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Winsley, Ranking Minority Member; Tate, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beck; Brekke; Hargrove; Hochstatter; R. King; and H. Myers.

**Staff:** David Knutson (786-7146).

**Background:** In the 1983-85 biennium, the Division of Mental Health, within the Department of Social and Health Services, established 10 Primary Intervention Projects in selected school districts. The program is based on the Primary Mental Health Program of Rochester, New York, which has operated since 1958. The purpose of the program is to identify children with social and emotional problems or early signs of being at-risk and to provide support and treatment to prevent greater problems in later life. The original projects were placed in the following school districts: Seattle, Highline, Clarkston, Federal way, Edmonds, Mukelteo, Lake Stevens, San Juan, Selah and Toppenish. In 1988, the Governor's Task Force on Children recommended the Primary Intervention Program be expanded to a statewide program.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** A school-based early prevention and intervention project designed for the early detection and prevention of emotional, behavioral and learning problems in the primary grades is created in statute.

The secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services may grant funds to selected school districts to implement the school-based early intervention project. The secretary, in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall develop guidelines for the projects including the following elements; (1) the project shall serve children in grades kindergarten through three; (2) children above grade three may be served if they represent no more than 15 percent of the participants; (3) the project shall serve children referred by the screening program, teachers, pupil service personnel, parents or community agencies; and (4) parental consent is required before screening or participation and parents should be involved in the treatment plan.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Incorrect references to organizations within the Department of Social and Health Services are corrected. The primary intervention programs will maximize federal funding for children's mental health services. The general fund-state appropriation is reduced by \$300,000 and the general fund-federal appropriation is increased by \$300,000. Counselors certified by the Department of Health, under the certification provisions of chapter 18.19 RCW, are included in the definition of a children's mental health professional.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested February 2, 1991.

**Appropriation:** Yes.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The existing primary intervention programs in schools are providing valuable mental health services to children in school. Program guidelines and standards should be codified in statute and funding increased to expand the program to additional schools.

**Testimony Against:** The Department of Social and Health Services cannot support any increase in funding for primary intervention programs, because funding for that purpose is not included in the governor's budget request for the 1991-93 biennium.

**Witnesses:** Kip Tokuda, Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (pro); Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society (pro); Pat Thibadeau, Washington Community Mental Health Centers (pro); Peter Berliner, Children's Alliance (pro); and Mary Sarno, Department of Social and Health Services (con).