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HOUSE BILL 1765

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State of Washington

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By Representatives L. Johnson, Morris, Long, Cooke, Dellwo, Mastin, Thibaudeau, Campbell, Riley, Johanson, Karahalios, Eide, J. Kohl, Springer and Leonard

Read first time 02/08/93. Referred to Committee on Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to a corrections mental health center operated  
2 through a partnership of the department of corrections and the  
3 University of Washington; creating a new section; and declaring an  
4 emergency.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) Historically the Washington state  
7 department of corrections has provided medical treatment to those  
8 committed to its care. Federal court decisions during the 1970's and  
9 1980's have mandated the availability of mental health treatment within  
10 the context of this corrections medical care.

11 While the department's overall census has increased significantly  
12 during the last five years, the proportion of mentally ill committed to  
13 the department has expanded at an even more dramatic rate. In 1985,  
14 two percent of the offenders entering corrections were considered to be  
15 in need of mental health treatment. By June 1992, this percentage had  
16 increased to fifteen percent of all incoming offenders. This number is  
17 anticipated to reach twenty percent for incoming offenders within the  
18 next five years.

1       Neither the quality nor quantity of mental health services within  
2 the department has been sufficient to meet this expanding need.  
3 Qualified mental health professionals have proved difficult to recruit,  
4 resulting in vacancy rates as high as twenty-two percent for these  
5 positions. Rarely do those few available professionals possess the  
6 unique skills and experience for this type of work. Corrections mental  
7 health staff training opportunities are limited as are research  
8 initiatives with this population. While such training and research has  
9 been available to state hospitals in recent years, comparable  
10 activities have not existed within corrections.

11       (2) To assist the department in training, research, and the  
12 enhancement of mental health services, the University of Washington and  
13 the department of corrections shall enter into a partnership. It shall  
14 be the responsibility of this partnership to establish a corrections  
15 mental health center located at McNeil Island corrections center to  
16 achieve the following objectives:

17       (a) Develop new and innovative treatment approaches for corrections  
18 mental health clients.

19       (b) Improve the quality of mental health services within the  
20 department.

21       (c) Facilitate mental health staff recruitment and training to meet  
22 departmental, county, and municipal needs.

23       (d) Expand research activities within the department in the area of  
24 treatment services, the design of delivery systems, the development of  
25 organizational models, and training for corrections mental health care  
26 professionals.

27       (e) Improve the work environment for correctional employees by  
28 developing the skills, knowledge, and understanding of how to work with  
29 offenders with special chronic mental health challenges.

30       (f) Establish a more positive rehabilitative environment for  
31 offenders.

32       (g) Strengthen multidisciplinary mental health collaboration  
33 between the University of Washington and the department of corrections.

34       (h) Strengthen department linkages between institutions of higher  
35 education, public sector mental health systems, and county and  
36 municipal corrections.

37       (i) Assist in the continued formulation of corrections mental  
38 health policies.

1 (j) Develop a pool of mental health professionals from which  
2 expertise and personnel in the area of corrections mental health may be  
3 drawn to meet state, county, and municipal needs.

4 (k) Assist in the development of a coordinated continuum of mental  
5 health care capable of providing services from corrections entry to  
6 community return.

7 (3) The corrections mental health center shall be responsible for  
8 conducting research, training, and treatment activities for the  
9 mentally ill offender within selected sites operated by the department.  
10 The department shall be responsible for the provision of support  
11 services for the center such as food services, maintenance, perimeter  
12 security, classification, offender supervision, and living unit  
13 functions. The University of Washington shall be active in developing  
14 this collaboration through its institute of public policy and  
15 management. As resources permit, training within the center shall be  
16 available to state, county, and municipal agencies requiring such  
17 services. Other state colleges, state universities, and mental health  
18 providers may be involved in activities as required on a subcontract  
19 basis. Community mental health organizations, research groups, and  
20 community advocacy groups shall be critical components of the center's  
21 operations and involved as appropriate to annual objectives. Mentally  
22 ill clients shall be drawn from throughout the department's population  
23 and transferred to the center as clinical need, available services, and  
24 department jurisdiction permits.

25 (4) The department shall prepare a report of the center's progress  
26 toward the attainment of stated goals and provide such report to the  
27 legislature annually.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
29 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
30 state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take  
31 effect immediately.

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