

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2114

As of March 20, 2003

Title: An act relating to the funding of family preservation and intervention services.

Brief Description: Establishing a family preservation and intervention services legislative task force.

Sponsors: House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi and Dickerson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: The Children's Administration (CA) in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) currently administers, through contracts, the following family preservation and intervention programs in support of families in the state:

- Alternative Response System (ARS) provides services to low-risk families referred to Child Protective Services (CPS). Services help families develop community support systems to keep children safe and families intact without intrusive CPS intervention. ARS serves families whose CPS referrals are determined to be low risk or moderately low risk at intake or after investigation. Priority is given to families who have one or more of the risk factors that research has shown to best predict the likelihood of re-referral.
- Continuum of Care (COC) provides early intervention services to low-risk families. Services are designed to be appropriate, accessible, and sensitive to the population served. COC involves local communities, schools, private entities, and state agencies in assessment and planning of services.
- Family Preservation Services (FPS) are available to families whose children face substantial likelihood of being placed outside of the home or to reunify children with their families from out-of-home care. FPS are available to families within 48 hours of referral and are offered for a maximum of six months. FPS are designed to support families by strengthening their relationships with a variety of community resources.
- Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) are available to families whose children DSHS believes are at imminent risk of foster care placement. IFPS are voluntary services that provide up to 20 hours of in-home therapist time each week, for about a 40-day period of time. Services are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Interventions are focused on improving the ability of the family to overcome a crisis situation and to remain together safely.

Summary of Bill: A Family Preservation and Intervention Services Legislative Task Force is established. The task force is required to establish a plan for implementing integration of funding for family preservation and intervention services in the state.

The membership of the task force is described and is composed of 15 members as follows: 11 members appointed by the Secretary of DSHS; and four members of the Legislature. Non-legislative members of the Task Force, except those representing an employer or organization, are entitled to reimbursement to be paid jointly by the Senate and the House of Representatives. Staff support for the task force must be provided by the House Office of Program Research and Senate Committee Services.

The task force must, at a minimum:

- Propose a decisionmaking structure for the distribution of funds;
- Clearly define a request for proposal process for the distribution of funds;
- Propose a formula for the equitable, statewide distribution of funds;
- Define populations to be served;
- Identify services eligible for funds; and
- Determine criteria that programs must meet in order to qualify for funds appropriated for family preservation and intervention services, including, at a minimum, identification of: clear, measurable outcomes; research that may be applicable; anticipated cost-effectiveness; broad community involvement, support, and partnerships; and provision of data related to program outcomes.

The task force must report to the Governor and the Legislature no later than December 1, 2003, and expires January 1, 2004.

The Legislature intends that DSHS implement the results of the work of the task force in the 2005-2007 biennium.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 20, 2003.

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