

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1456

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to home visits by mental health professionals.

Brief Description: Providing backup for mental health professionals doing home visits.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Hinkle, Appleton, Cody, Moeller, Strow, Crouse, Curtis, Seaquist, Jarrett, Hasegawa, Walsh, P. Sullivan, Buri, Simpson, O'Brien, Lantz, Hunt, McDonald, Sells, Schual-Berke, Linville, Kessler, Hankins, Haler, Skinner, Campbell, Morrell, Darneille, Armstrong, Dunshee, Fromhold, Kagi, Williams, Conway, Barlow, Grant, Priest, Dunn, Hunter, Hurst, Ericks, Pearson, Anderson, Clibborn, Pettigrew, Flannigan, Lovick, Dickerson, Kenney, Ormsby, Haigh, Wood, Rolfes, Santos and McDermott.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/12/07, 2/14/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Mental health professionals will not be required to conduct home visits alone, and will be given resources to lessen the danger of home visits.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Campbell, Condotta, Curtis, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

There are designated mental health professionals (DMHPs) who perform initial evaluations and detentions pursuant to the involuntary commitment statutes and provide crisis outreach services for individuals with mental disorders. These DMHPs occasionally evaluate people

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for involuntary detention or provide crisis outreach services in the homes of individuals with mental disorders.

Summary of Bill:

No DMHP or other mental health crisis outreach worker will be required to conduct home visits alone. Employers will equip mental health workers who engage in home visits with a communication device. Mental health workers dispatched on crisis outreach visits will have prompt access to any history of dangerousness or potential dangerousness on the client they are visiting, if available. All community mental health workers who work directly with clients will be provided with annual training on safety and violence prevention. The bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a carefully worked compromise between community mental health agencies and organizations representing community mental health workers. It will provide greater safety for community mental health workers.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Bruce Bardwell, Compass Health and Service Employees International Union; and Marie Manlangit, Service Employees International Union.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Jean Wessman, Washington State Association of Counties.