
Human Services Committee

HB 2055

Brief Description: Concerning traumatic brain injuries.

Sponsors: Representatives Flannigan, Ahern, McCoy, Ormsby and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds several provisions to assist individuals with traumatic brain injuries including creating an advisory council, developing a public awareness campaign, facilitating support groups, and creating an account to fund the public awareness campaign and support groups.

Hearing Date: 2/20/07

Staff: Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

Background:

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. A TBI can result when the head suddenly and violently hits an object, or when an object pierces the skull and enters brain tissue. Symptoms of a TBI can be mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the extent of the damage to the brain.

Traumatic brain injury can cause a wide range of functional changes. Disabilities resulting from a TBI depend upon the severity of the injury, the location of the injury, and the age and general health of the individual. Some common disabilities include problems with cognition (thinking, memory, and reasoning), sensory processing (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), communication (expression and understanding), and behavior or mental health.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that at least 5.3 million Americans, approximately 2% of the U.S. population, currently have a long-term or lifelong need for help to perform activities of daily living as a result of a TBI. Traumatic brain injuries contribute to a substantial number of deaths and cases of permanent disability annually.

According to the CDC, of the 1.4 million who sustain a TBI each year in the United States:

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- 50,000 die;
- 235,000 are hospitalized; and
- 1.1 million are treated and released from an emergency department.

Among children under 14 years of age, TBI results in an estimated:

- 2,685 deaths;
- 37,000 hospitalizations; and
- 435,000 emergency department visits annually.

The federal government created the Traumatic Brain Injury Program (Program) to improve access to health and other services regarding TBI. The Program competitively awards state planning, implementation, and post demonstration grants. Washington has received grants under this Program of \$100,000 for the purpose of building the systems and the infrastructure to deliver services to individuals with TBI. The Program is being administered through the Aging and Disability Services Administration in the Department of Social and Health Services.

Summary of Bill:

New Chapter

A new chapter is created in Title 74 to address new sections of law dealing with TBI.

Advisory Council

The bill creates the Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council (Council) within the Department of Social and Health Services (Department). The Council consists of a wide variety of individuals who are appointed by the Governor. The Council includes representatives from several state agencies, non-profit agencies working with individuals with TBI, medical specialists, rehabilitation and vocational specialists, social workers, veterans, the Washington Protection and Advocacy System, individuals with TBI and family members of persons with TBI.

The initial appointments to the Council will be made by September 1, 2007, and the terms will be run for three years. The Council will annually elect a chairperson.

The duties of the Council include the following:

- provide oversight in acquiring and utilizing state and federal funding dedicated to services for individuals with TBIs;
- provide recommendations to the Department on criteria to be used to select programs facilitating support groups for individuals with TBIs and their families;
- submit a report to the Department containing recommendations regarding the needs of individuals with TBI; identified gaps in services; how to build provider capacity and provider training; improving the coordination of services; and the feasibility of establishing agreements with private sector agencies to develop services; and
- submit a report to the Governor and Legislature regarding the work of the Department and improvements in services and programs for individuals with TBIs.

The Department is required to appoint staff to coordinate policies, programs and services for individuals with TBI. The Department is required to collaborate with the Advisory Council to complete the following:

- investigate the needs of individuals with TBIs;
- identify gaps in services to individuals with TBIs;
- facilitate collaboration among state agencies that provide services to individuals with TBIs;
- facilitate collaboration among organizations and entities that provide services to individuals with TBIs; and
- encourage and facilitate community participation in program implementation.

The Department is required to report to the Governor and the Legislature on the actions of the Council; actions taken by the Department to meet the needs of individuals with TBIs; and recommendations for the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to address the needs of individuals with TBIs, including the use of public-private partnerships and a public awareness campaign.

Program Development

By December 1, 2007, the Department is required to institute, in collaboration with the Council, a public awareness campaign that utilizes state or federal funding to leverage a private advertising campaign to promote awareness of TBIs through all forms of media including television, radio, and print.

The Department is also required to provide funding to programs that facilitate support groups to individuals with TBIs and their families. The Department shall use a request for proposal process to select the programs to receive funding. The Council must provide recommendations to the Department on the criteria to be used in selecting the programs. The public awareness campaign and the support groups will be funded solely from the TBI account, to the extent that funds are available.

Traumatic Brain Injury Account

The Traumatic Brain Injury Account (Account) is created with the State Treasurer. The Department may authorize spending on contracts with community-based organizations for prevention, referral, and support services relating to TBI.

The Account is funded by fees collected as part of a reissuing fee on licenses that have been suspended for driving under the influence. The reissuing fee is increased from \$150 to \$200. Twenty-four percent of each fee collected must be deposited in the Account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 7, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.