

VETO MESSAGE ON SSB 5779

May 5, 2017

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to Section 7,
Substitute Senate Bill No. 5779 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to behavioral health integration
in primary care."

Section 7 of this bill states that subject to appropriation, the Health Care Authority should implement a rate with "the intention that it will increase the availability of behavioral health services and incentivize adoption of the primary care behavioral health model." The section further states that the rate should "provide increased reimbursement to providers for behavioral health services provided to patients in primary care settings."

Section 7 is unnecessary because we do not yet know what funding may be required and no budget has identified funding that corresponds to this section of this bill. This section is therefore premature and the agency does not have the capacity to absorb any new potential costs within its current funding.

"This veto does not impact the substance of the bill. I agree that we must increase access to behavioral health services; this is a priority the state has been deeply engaged in for some time. In addition, while I am vetoing Section 7, I am directing the Health Care Authority once the payment code review is done as required in the substance of the bill, to recommend an appropriate reimbursement rate for providers for this work, and report any projected costs to the appropriate committees of the legislature and myself by October 15, 2017, and submit a decision package for consideration as part of next year's supplemental budget."

For these reasons I have vetoed Section 7 of Substitute Senate Bill No. 5779.

With the exception of Section 7, Substitute Senate Bill No. 5779 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Inslee
Governor