
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 2054

Brief Description: Establishing an agency to operate state behavioral health facilities.

Sponsors: Representatives DeBolt, Tharinger, Schmick and Cody.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Transfers the Department of Social and Health Services' responsibilities for the operation of state psychiatric hospitals and residential habilitation centers to a newly established Department of Behavioral Health Facilities as of July 1, 2020.

Hearing Date: 2/22/19

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

State Hospitals.

Western State Hospital and Eastern State Hospital are adult psychiatric hospitals that provide involuntary inpatient treatment for individuals with mental disorders who are committed by civil and criminal courts. The facilities are operated by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The Western State Hospital is located in the Lakewood area of Pierce County and has over 800 inpatient beds, which serve individuals from western Washington counties. The Eastern State Hospital is located in the Medical Lake area of Spokane County and has over 300 inpatient beds, which serve individuals from eastern Washington counties. The DSHS also operates the Child Study and Treatment Center in Lakewood, a 47-bed facility that provides psychiatric services for children 5-18 years old throughout the state.

The state hospitals provide inpatient mental health treatment to persons involuntarily committed under a variety of circumstances. A person may be committed to a state hospital through a civil process under the Involuntary Treatment Act if, due to a mental disorder, the person poses a likelihood of serious harm or is gravely disabled. The state hospitals also provide services to

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persons involuntarily committed through the forensic system. A forensic commitment may be for the purpose of competency to stand trial evaluation or restoration services, or may be the result of an insanity acquittal.

Residential Habilitation Centers.

The Developmental Disabilities Administration within the DSHS provides support and services to persons with developmental disabilities. Services include case management, needs assessments, support in activities of daily living, employment, and rehabilitative therapies. The DSHS also provides medical, dental, and pharmaceutical services to persons with developmental disabilities. Services may be provided in three different service settings: in the client's own home; in a community residential home; or in a Residential Habilitation Center (RHC).

The DSHS operates four RHCs for qualified developmentally disabled citizens. The RHCs provide 24-hour residential housing for individuals needing institutional care. In addition, RHCs provide respite care and other specialized services to eligible individuals living in the community. The RHCs in operation are: Fircrest School, located in Shoreline; Lakeland Village, located in Medical Lake; Rainier School, located in Buckley; and Yakima Valley School, located in Selah.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Behavioral Health Facilities (DBHF) is established as of July 1, 2020. The DBHF is led by a secretary appointed by the Governor. The DBHF is responsible for the operation of state hospitals and residential habilitation centers. The DBHF is authorized to coordinate with other state, local, and tribal agencies to coordinate the transfer of people into the custody of the DBHF or the discharge of people from the custody of the DBHF. In addition, DBHF may collaborate with other state and federal agencies to maximize federal participation in funding state hospitals and residential habilitation centers.

The Office of Financial Management must establish an interagency work group that includes representatives of the Department of Social and Health Services, the Health Care Authority, the Department of Health, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. The work group must develop a plan for transitioning functions to the DBHF and sharing responsibilities among agencies. The work group must identify any legislation that is necessary to establish the DBHF by July 1, 2020.

Existing authority related to the operation of state hospitals and residential habilitation centers is shifted from the DSHS to the DBHF. This includes authority related to the disclosing information regarding persons in state hospitals, remanding persons to state hospitals, notifying people in the event of an escape from a state hospital, protecting the rights of persons at state hospitals, accessing records of court proceedings related to civil commitments, and operating programs for persons with developmental disabilities who have been civilly committed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect July 1, 2020, except for section 12, relating to the use of less restrictive alternatives, which takes effect July 1, 2026.