

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6648

As of February 7, 2020

Title: An act relating to establishing a pilot program to create a safe station for persons who need substance use disorder treatment.

Brief Description: Establishing a safe station pilot program.

Sponsors: Senators Zeiger, Wagoner and Wilson, C.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care: 2/06/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Commerce to manage a grant to establish a Safe Station pilot program in a fire department in Washington.
- Allows a certified substance use disorder peer specialist to be employed in the Safe Station pilot program.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE TO HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: A substance use disorder is a disease that affects a person's brain and behavior and leads to an inability to control the use of alcohol or a legal or illegal drug or medication.

Safe Station is a program that began in the cities of Manchester and Nashua, New Hampshire, and has spread to other cities in the New England area. A press release issued by the City of Providence, Rhode Island, indicates that as of June 2019, 12 Safe Station programs were deployed in Providence. A Safe Station is a fire department that orders friendly and judgement-free screening for persons who believe they may have a need for substance use disorder treatment. A Safe Station may provide a referral to services in the community and transportation for emergency medical services if there is a need.

The City of Tacoma has established a Safe Station program.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A certified substance use disorder peer is a person with lived experience of a substance use disorder who has completed a training and certification program administered by the Health Care Authority. In 2019, coverage for the services of certified substance use disorder peer counselors was added to the state Medicaid program.

Summary of Bill: Commerce must manage a grant program to award funding to a fire department in the state of Washington to implement a Safe Station pilot program.

Certified substance use disorder peer specialists must be permitted to be employed in the Safe Station pilot program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: As we work to address the opioid crisis in this state, we should pay attention to what other states and local governments are doing and try to borrow good ideas. In Providence, the mayor has worked with the fire departments to create Safe Stations where people can walk in, and during that critical moment of willingness, get a referral to the help they need. A Safe Station can provide a medical assessment, transportation to a health care facility, addiction treatment, initial medication for opioid use disorder, and connections to long-term treatment services at low cost. It will not work in every department, but it may be a tool some fire departments would want to use. We should open a lot of doors to people to get help.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Hans Zeiger, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.