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**HOUSE BILL 1883**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Chopp, Ryu, Santos, Simmons, Slatter, Stonier, Wicks, Peterson, Goodman, Ormsby, Dolan, Ramel, Taylor, Callan, Riccelli, Lekanoff, Davis, Fey, Macri, Valdez, and Pollet

AN ACT Relating to establishing a lifeline for youth and young adults who have experienced or are at risk of entering into public systems of care; adding a new chapter to Title 43 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that youth and young adults continue to disproportionately exit public systems of care into chronic instability, such as homelessness and involvement in the criminal legal system. Further, support systems in Washington are unnecessarily fragmented and often difficult for youth and young adults to navigate during times of need. The legislature finds that cascading impacts of insufficient support and mentorship create systemic barriers and increased rates of chronic stress and trauma including, but not limited to, reduced high school graduation rates, chronic homelessness, increased child welfare and juvenile justice and criminal legal system involvement, limited postsecondary education attainment, and greater barriers to employment in adulthood.

(2) The legislature finds that preventative services are more cost-effective than emergency services, and that preventative services yield better long-term results for beneficiaries and Washington's economy. The legislature recognizes that people with personal experience in public systems of care have a unique perspective and outlook on life to improve work environments, culture, and equitability. The legislature further finds that an effective and accessible lifeline to services is necessary to the health of Washington's economy.

(3) The legislature recognizes that a report commissioned by the department of commerce in 2020 found that young persons are more likely to experience chronic stress and trauma when they are not discharged into safe and stable environments. The legislature further finds that one in four of youth and young adults exiting public systems of care experienced housing instability within 12 months. The legislature finds that system modification is needed to improve outcomes for youth and young adults through better transition planning and support before and after exit from public systems of care. The legislature finds that access to resource assistance for youth and young adults with experience in public systems of care needs to be streamlined. In communities where resources are inadequate to meet the demand, the state must directly fill existing gaps and promote community partnerships as the basis of a shared coalition to create additional resources.

(4) Therefore, the legislature intends to establish streamlined support and access to services for youth and young adults who have experienced or are at risk of entering public systems of care. The legislature intends to establish the lifeline for independent living to facilitate and promote partnerships across state agencies, tribes, counties, and community-based providers to coordinate trauma-informed, healing-centered, and culturally responsive services for youth and young adults and their natural supports to facilitate stability.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the governor, in collaboration with the department of commerce, shall establish the lifeline for independent living to provide support and connections to services for youth and young adults, who have experienced or are at risk of entering into public systems of care, and who require assistance to overcome a life challenge that could escalate into a crisis, or are in need of general mentorship and counsel. The lifeline shall facilitate and promote partnerships across state agencies, tribes, counties, and community-based providers to coordinate trauma-informed and culturally responsive services for youth and young adults and their supports.

(2) Activities of the lifeline must be carried out by a director of the lifeline, supervised by the office of the governor. The director shall oversee the administration, programs, and policies of the lifeline in accordance with the principles in this chapter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, a lifeline for independent living task force is established to determine the lifeline's structure, policy, and best practices. The lifeline for independent living task force shall be administered by the department of commerce.

(2) The lifeline for independent living task force shall include at a minimum representation from the department of commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the office of the governor, a Washington or federally recognized Indian tribe, Washington counties, community-based providers and advocacy organizations, and youth and young adults with personal experience in each public system of care. To the extent possible, the lifeline for independent living task force membership should include representatives from geographically diverse and priority populations.

(3) This section expires January 30, 2023.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The lifeline for independent living shall assume performance of the following activities:

(a) Establishment of four lifeline regional centers across the state by January 1, 2023, with a headquarters located in Olympia. The lifeline shall be operational throughout the state by January 1, 2024;

(b) Creation of training modules for lifeline regional center volunteers by December 1, 2022, and coordination of the activities of the lifeline throughout the centers according to standards adopted by the lifeline;

(c) Establishment of a toll-free telephone number, website, and other appropriate technology to facilitate access to contracting advocacy organization services for youth and young adults accessing the lifeline;

(d) Formation of rules and procedures to provide proactive support to youth and young adults who access the lifeline who cannot be served sufficiently through existing services;

(e) Establishment of a uniform reporting system to collect and analyze nonidentifiable data relating to calls and services provided by lifeline volunteers or facilities for the purpose of identifying and resolving significant problems, and to submit the data to all appropriate state agencies on a regular basis; and

(f)(i) Establishment of a steering committee to oversee operations of the lifeline and ensure satisfactory coordination of services.

(ii) The steering committee membership shall be comprised of the members of the task force established in section 3 of this act and shall include at a minimum representation from the department of commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the office of the governor, a Washington or federally recognized Indian tribe, Washington counties, community-based providers and advocacy organizations, and youth and young adults with personal experience in each public system of care.

(iii) The steering committee shall provide guidance and recommendations to the lifeline program regarding funding, policy, and practice gaps within and among state programs.

(iv) The steering committee must have its initial meeting no later than March 1, 2023.

(2) Beginning December 30, 2023, and annually thereafter, the lifeline for independent living must submit, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, a report to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature with findings and recommendations for improving services and service delivery from subsection (1) of this section. The report shall include the following:

(a) The number of individuals who have accessed the resources described in subsection (1) of this section;

(b) The number of service providers and organizations, by type, who the lifeline has accessed for the resources described in subsection (1) of this section;

(c) Demographic information, as available, for the individuals described in (a) of this subsection. Demographic information may not include any personally identifiable information and must be limited to the individual's age, gender, and city and county of residence;

(d) A description of resources provided;

(e) Average time frame from receipt of call to referral for services or resources provided; and

(f) Systemic barriers to services.

(3) The lifeline for independent living shall designate a liaison who reports directly to the director of the lifeline to serve as the liaison between state agencies, the office of the governor, the legislature, and community partners to identify long-term solutions for issues that require use of the account established in section 5 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The lifeline for independent living account is created in the state treasury. All receipts from moneys directed to the account must be deposited in the account. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used for activities that are dedicated to the benefit of youth and young adults who have or are expected to experience public systems of care.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Lifeline" means the lifeline for independent living established in section 2 of this act.

(2) "Public systems of care" means office of homeless youth prevention and protection shelter and housing programs, the juvenile justice system, dependency under chapter 13.34 RCW, and inpatient behavioral health treatment.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 6 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

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