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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2075**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2022 Regular Session**

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Peterson, Fitzgibbon, Simmons, Morgan, Chopp, Walen, Macri, and Sutherland)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/22.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing service requirements for the  
2 department of social and health services; adding a new section to  
3 chapter 74.04 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that  
6 establishing minimum service requirements for the department of  
7 social and health services is necessary due to the increase in call  
8 center wait times due to the closure of department offices during the  
9 COVID-19 public health emergency, resulting in individuals being  
10 unable to access safety net programs at the department.

11 (2) The legislature intends to establish minimum service  
12 expectations and requirements to ensure that eligible individuals  
13 receive needed services through the department of social and health  
14 services. The legislature further intends to prohibit the department  
15 from imposing punitive measures against individuals when they are  
16 unable to comply with the requirements the department imposes for  
17 individuals to maintain benefits if they are unable to interact with  
18 the department due to operating decisions made by the department,  
19 such as the closure of community service offices.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 74.04  
2 RCW to read as follows:

3        (1)    Minimum service expectations and requirements for the  
4 department are established.

5        (a)    The department shall ensure that clients may apply for and  
6 receive services in a manner that is suited to the clients' needs.  
7 This includes, but is not limited to, meeting client needs related to  
8 technology, language, and ability.

9        (b)    Community service offices must be open for walk-in and in-  
10 person services.

11        (i)    The department may not limit which clients are able to use  
12 walk-in services or limit which services may be accessed in community  
13 service offices.

14        (ii)    The department shall restore a certain level of staffing for  
15 in-person services during a state of emergency.

16        (c)    The department shall maintain telephonic access to services.

17        (i)    The average wait time for a department call center may not  
18 exceed 30 minutes.

19        (ii)    The department shall determine the average wait time for  
20 client telephone calls per week, and include a measurement of all  
21 incoming calls, including dropped calls.

22        (iii)    Beginning November 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the  
23 department shall report to the appropriate committees of the  
24 legislature and the governor in compliance with RCW 43.01.036 on the  
25 average wait time for client telephone calls per week, the  
26 measurement of all incoming calls, and the number of dropped calls.

27        (2)    If the department fails to meet the minimum service  
28 requirements of this section, benefit recipients may not be subject  
29 to punitive measures as it relates to their assistance.

30        (3)    The department may not terminate or sanction any client's  
31 benefits unless the community service office is fully open and  
32 operational to the public in the client's region.

33        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    If specific funding for the purposes of  
34 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not  
35 provided by June 30, 2022, in the omnibus appropriations act, this  
36 act is null and void.

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