
**Human Services, Youth, & Early
Learning Committee**

ESSB 5599

Brief Description: Supporting youth and young adults seeking protected health care services.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Senators Liias, Wilson, C., Dhingra, Lovelett, Nguyen and Randall).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Expands the compelling reasons for a youth shelter or other similar organization not to notify a parent following the child's entry to the shelter or organization when a minor child is seeking or receiving gender affirming treatment and reproductive health care services.
- Allows host homes to host a youth seeking or receiving gender affirming treatment or reproductive health care services without receiving parental permission.

Hearing Date: 3/22/23

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Licensed Overnight Youth Shelters.

When a youth first enters an overnight shelter, the facility must:

- determine whether the youth's parents are aware of the whereabouts of the youth;
- follow parental notification procedures (provided below); and
- notify law enforcement or the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) of any youth age 12 or younger who is unaccompanied by an adult and requesting services.

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

If an overnight youth shelter or licensed organization providing services for runaway or homeless youth learns that a youth staying in its facility does not have parental permission, the facility must:

- notify the parent by telephone or other reasonable means unless compelling reasons exist within 72 hours, preferably within 24 hours;
- notify the DCYF if compelling reasons exist not to notify a parent including concerns of abuse or neglect; and
- review the publicly available information on missing youth made available by the Washington State Patrol at least every eight hours while the youth is present.

Compelling reasons not to notify a parent include, but are not limited to circumstances that indicate that notifying the parent or legal guardian will subject the minor to abuse or neglect.

Host Home.

A host home is defined as a private home that volunteers to host youth in need of temporary placement that is associated with a host home program.

To qualify for exemption from licensure, host home program must:

- recruit and screen potential homes in the program, including performing background checks on the individuals living in the home who are over age 18;
- screen and provide case management to youth in the program;
- obtain a notarized permission slip or limited power of attorney from the parent or legal guardian of the youth authorizing the youth to participate in the program;
- obtain insurance;
- provide mandatory reporter and confidentiality training; and
- register as a nonprofit organization with the Office of the Secretary of State.

Any host home program that receives government funding must report certain information to the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs.

Gender Affirming Treatment.

Gender affirming treatment is defined in law to mean a service or product that a health care provider prescribes to an individual to support and affirm the individual's gender identity that includes, but is not limited to, treatment for gender dysphoria.

Reproductive Health Care Services.

Reproductive health care services are defined in state law to mean any medical services or treatments, including pharmaceutical and preventative care service or treatments, directly involved in the reproductive system and its processes, functions, and organs involved in reproductions, in all stages of life. Reproductive health care services do not include infertility treatment.

Summary of Bill:

The compelling reasons for a youth shelter or other similar organization not to notify a parent when the shelter or organization knows the child is away from a lawfully prescribed home without parental permission are expanded to include when a minor child is seeking or receiving gender affirming treatment and reproductive health care services.

An exception is created to the requirement that a host home program obtain a notarized permission slip or limited power of attorney from a parent or legal guardian of the youth authorizing the youth to participate in the program with authorization updated every six months when the youth is seeking or receiving gender affirming treatment or reproductive health care services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.