
SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1956

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Leavitt, Griffey, Ryu, Couture, Ramel, Slatter, Reed, Ormsby, Barnard, Callan, Timmons, Kloba, Cheney, Doglio, Paul, Berg, Lekanoff, Reeves, Riccelli, Wylie, Hackney, Pollet, and Shavers; by request of Office of the Governor)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to fentanyl and other substance use prevention
2 education; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; adding a new
3 section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; creating new sections; providing
4 expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that overdoses
7 and overdose deaths, particularly from synthetic opioids, have
8 increased in recent years. According to the federal centers for
9 disease control and prevention, among persons aged 14 through 18,
10 overdose deaths increased 94 percent from 2019 to 2020 and 20 percent
11 from 2020 to 2021. In 2021, over 75 percent of all drug overdose
12 deaths involved opioids, with synthetic opioids, including fentanyl,
13 accounting for nearly 88 percent of those deaths. Between 2022 and
14 2023, Washington saw the largest increase in overdose deaths of any
15 state at 40 percent.

16 (2) The legislature recognizes that fatal overdose risk among
17 adolescents is increasing due to widespread availability of illicitly
18 manufactured fentanyl, proliferation of counterfeit pills resembling
19 prescription drugs but containing illicit drugs, and ease of
20 purchasing pills through social media. The United States drug
21 enforcement administration states that there is significant risk that

1 illegal drugs have been intentionally contaminated with fentanyl. As
2 a result, many young people may ingest a lethal dose without knowing
3 that they are consuming fentanyl.

4 (3) The legislature acknowledges that the level of public health
5 crisis created by use of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids
6 requires an immediate, substantial, and coordinated effort by
7 national, state, and local public health, social service, and
8 educational agencies working together.

9 (4) The legislature also acknowledges that the popularity of
10 drugs grows and wanes forming distinct drug epidemics, similar to
11 disease epidemics. As the popularity and availability of synthetic
12 opioids wanes, it is likely that some other substance will pose the
13 next acute public health crisis.

14 (5) Therefore, in order to combat the current public health
15 crisis of abuse of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, and to be
16 prepared to address the next drug epidemic before it reaches crisis
17 level, the legislature intends to direct the state department of
18 health to deploy a statewide substance use prevention and awareness
19 campaign that evolves to address the substance or substances with the
20 greatest impact on the health of Washington youth and their families,
21 diverse regions and communities, and the broader public. The
22 legislature also intends for the public education system to actively
23 incorporate campaign messages and materials in classrooms, as well as
24 in family and community communications.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70
26 RCW to read as follows:

27 (1) The department shall develop, implement, and maintain a
28 statewide drug overdose prevention and awareness campaign to address
29 the drug overdose epidemic.

30 (2)(a) The campaign must educate the public about the dangers of
31 methamphetamines and opioids, including fentanyl, and the harms
32 caused by drug use. The campaign must include outreach to both youth
33 and adults aimed at preventing substance use and overdose deaths.

34 (b) The department, in consultation with the health care
35 authority, may also include messaging focused on substance use
36 disorder and overdose death prevention, resources for addiction
37 treatment and services, and information on immunity for people who
38 seek medical assistance in a drug overdose situation pursuant to RCW
39 69.50.315.

1 (3) The 2024 and 2025 campaigns must focus on increasing the
2 awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids,
3 including the high possibility that other drugs are contaminated with
4 synthetic opioids and that even trace amounts of synthetic opioids
5 can be lethal.

6 (4) Beginning June 30, 2025, and each year thereafter, the
7 department must submit a report to the appropriate committees of the
8 legislature on the content and distribution of the statewide drug
9 overdose prevention and awareness campaign. The report must include a
10 summary of the messages distributed during the campaign, the mediums
11 through which the campaign was operated, and data on how many
12 individuals received information through the campaign. The report
13 must be submitted in compliance with RCW 43.01.036.

14 (5) This section expires July 1, 2029.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
18 collaborate with the department of health, the health care authority,
19 other state agencies, and educational service districts to develop
20 age-appropriate substance use prevention and awareness materials for
21 school and classroom uses. These materials must be periodically
22 updated to align with substance use prevention and awareness
23 campaigns implemented by the department of health and the health care
24 authority.

25 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
26 actively distribute the materials developed under subsection (1) of
27 this section to school districts, public schools, educational service
28 districts, and community-based organizations that provide extended
29 learning opportunities, and strongly encourage the incorporation of
30 age-appropriate materials in classrooms, as well as in family and
31 community communications.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) By December 1, 2024, the office of the
33 superintendent of public instruction shall adjust the state health
34 and physical education learning standards for middle and high school
35 students to add opioids to the list of drugs included in drug-related
36 education.

37 (2) By December 1, 2024, the office of the superintendent of
38 public instruction must collaborate with the department of health,

1 the health care authority, other state agencies, and educational
2 service districts to develop school and classroom materials on the
3 lethality of fentanyl and other opioids. The office of the
4 superintendent of public instruction must make these materials
5 available to assist schools in implementing the state health and
6 physical education learning standards for middle and high school
7 students, adjusted as required by subsection (1) of this section.

8 (3) This section expires July 1, 2026.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act is necessary for the immediate
10 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
11 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
12 effect immediately.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** If specific funding for the purposes of
14 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not
15 provided by June 30, 2024, in the omnibus appropriations act, this
16 act is null and void.

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