

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5427

As of February 3, 2025

Title: An act relating to extending the program to address complex cases of children in crisis.

Brief Description: Extending the program to address complex cases of children in crisis.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, C., Hasegawa, Nobles and Trudeau.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services: 2/05/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the position of the Children and Youth Multisystem Care Coordinator to the Children and Youth Multisystem Care Project Director (project director).
- Extends the duties of the project director and rapid care team from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2027.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Staff: Kelsey-anne Fung (786-7479)

Background: Children and Youth Multisystem Care Coordinator. Under legislation passed in 2023, the Governor must maintain a Children and Youth Multisystem Care Coordinator (care coordinator) to serve as a state lead on addressing complex cases of children in crisis. The care coordinator, in coordination with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Health Care Authority, Office of Financial Management, and Department of Social and Health Services, must develop and implement a rapid care team to support and identify appropriate services and living arrangements for a child in crisis and their family, if appropriate. There are specified individuals who may refer a child in crisis to the rapid care team.

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.

Children in crisis are defined as individuals under age 18 who are:

- staying in or at risk of remaining in a hospital without medical necessity, without the ability to return to the care of a parent, and not dependent; or
- dependent, experiencing placement instability, and referred to the rapid care team by DYCF.

In creating the rapid care team, the care coordinator must develop and implement a system for:

- identifying children in crisis who should be served by the rapid care team;
- initiating the rapid care team in a timely manner that reduces the time a child in crisis spends in a hospital without medical need;
- locating services and connecting youth and families with the appropriate services to allow the child in crisis to safely discharge from a hospital;
- screening referrals for a child in crisis; and
- determining when it would be appropriate for DCYF to provide services to a child in crisis.

The Governor was required to provide an initial legislative report by November 1, 2023, and a final report by November 1, 2024, with specified data and information on the rapid care team. The report must include:

- the number of children in crisis referred to the rapid care team and the types of people making referrals to the rapid care team;
- the demographic data of the children in crisis served by the rapid care team;
- the types of services and living arrangements identified by the rapid care team;
- the availability of the services and living arrangements identified as needed for the children in crisis served by the rapid care team;
- any barriers preventing children in crisis from safely exiting the hospital setting when there is not a medical need for that hospital stay;
- any barriers preventing children in crisis who are dependent from maintaining an appropriate and stable placement;
- recommendations for earlier intervention to prevent children from becoming children in crisis;
- discussion regarding the implementation of youth behavioral health and inpatient navigator programs and their role in serving children in crisis; and
- recommendations for systemic changes that could replace the rapid care team in addressing complex cases of children in crisis.

The care coordinator and rapid care team expire June 30, 2025.

Summary of Bill: The position of the care coordinator is changed to the Children and Youth Multisystem Care Project Director (project director). The duties of the project director and the rapid care team are extended from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2027.

Outdated reporting requirements are removed, and instead an annual report must be provided by the Governor to the Legislature with data and recommendations related to the rapid care team.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.