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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1272**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Callan, Eslick, Berry, Leavitt, Salahuddin, Davis, Reed, Nance, Kloba, Timmons, Macri, Simmons, Hunt, and Fey)

READ FIRST TIME 02/21/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to extending the program to address complex cases  
2 of children in crisis; amending RCW 43.06.535; creating a new  
3 section; providing an expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.06.535 and 2023 c 423 s 1 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The governor must maintain a children and youth multisystem  
8 care (~~coordinator~~) project director to serve as a state lead on  
9 addressing complex cases of children in crisis. The children and  
10 youth multisystem care (~~coordinator~~) project director must:

11 (a) Direct:

12 (i) The appropriate use of state and other resources to a child  
13 in crisis, and that child's family, if appropriate; and

14 (ii) Appropriate and timely action by state agencies to serve  
15 children in crisis;

16 (b) Have access to flexible funds to support:

17 (i) The safe discharge of children in crisis from hospitals; and

18 (ii) Long-term, appropriate placement for children in crisis who  
19 are dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW; and

20 (c) Coordinate with:

1 (i) The rapid response team established under RCW 43.216.205 to  
2 make sure that resources are effectively identified and mobilized for  
3 people who meet the definition of child in crisis and a youth or  
4 young adult exiting a publicly funded system of care; and

5 (ii) Youth behavioral health and inpatient navigator teams to  
6 efficiently and effectively mobilize services for a child in crisis.

7 (2) The children and youth multisystem care (~~coordinator~~)  
8 project director created under this section, in coordination with the  
9 department of children, youth, and families, the health care  
10 authority, the office of financial management, and the department of  
11 social and health services, shall develop and implement a rapid care  
12 team for the purpose of supporting and identifying appropriate  
13 services and living arrangements for a child in crisis, and that  
14 child's family, if appropriate. (~~The rapid care team created under  
15 this section must be implemented as soon as possible, but no later  
16 than January 1, 2024.~~)

17 (3) In creating the rapid care team required under this section,  
18 the children and youth multisystem care (~~coordinator~~) project  
19 director created under this section shall develop and implement a  
20 system for:

21 (a) Identifying children in crisis who should be served by the  
22 rapid care team;

23 (b) Initiating the rapid care team in a timely manner that  
24 reduces the time a child in crisis spends in a hospital without a  
25 medical need;

26 (c) Locating services and connecting youth and families with the  
27 appropriate services to allow the child in crisis to safely discharge  
28 from a hospital;

29 (d) Screening referrals for a child in crisis; and

30 (e) Determining when it would be appropriate for the department  
31 of children, youth, and families to provide services to a child in  
32 crisis as the:

33 (i) Youth meets the definition of a "child who is a candidate for  
34 foster care" under RCW 74.13.020;

35 (ii) Youth meets the definition of "dependent child" under RCW  
36 13.34.030(6)(a) based on the child being abandoned; or

37 (iii) Family should be offered a voluntary placement agreement.

38 (4) The rapid care team under this section may provide assistance  
39 and support to a child in crisis, or the family of a child in crisis.

1 (5) The following individuals may refer a child in crisis to the  
2 rapid care team:

3 (a) A child in crisis themselves;

4 (b) A family member of the child in crisis;

5 (c) An advocate for the child in crisis;

6 (d) An educator;

7 (e) A law enforcement officer;

8 (f) An employee of the department of children, youth, and  
9 families;

10 (g) An employee of the department of social and health services;

11 (h) An employee of the health care authority;

12 (i) A service provider contracting with the department of  
13 children, youth, and families;

14 (j) A service provider contracting with the department of social  
15 and health services;

16 (k) A behavioral health service provider;

17 (l) A representative of a managed care organization;

18 (m) A representative from a youth behavioral health or inpatient  
19 navigator team;

20 (n) A person providing health care services to the child in  
21 crisis; or

22 (o) A hospital employee.

23 (6) (~~By November 1, 2023, the governor shall provide an initial~~  
24 ~~report to the legislature describing the process of developing and~~  
25 ~~implementing the rapid care team created under this section, and must~~  
26 ~~include a projection of when the rapid care team process will be~~  
27 ~~implemented. By November 1, 2024, the~~) The governor shall provide  
28 ((~~a final~~)) an annual report to the legislature including data and  
29 recommendations related to the rapid care team created in this  
30 section. The report required under this subsection must be submitted  
31 in compliance with RCW 43.01.036. The report required under this  
32 subsection must include the following:

33 (a) The number of children in crisis referred to the rapid care  
34 team and the types of people making referrals to the rapid care team;

35 (b) The demographic data of the children in crisis served by the  
36 rapid care team;

37 (c) The types of services and living arrangements identified by  
38 the rapid care team;

1 (d) The availability of the services and living arrangements  
2 identified as needed for the children in crisis served by the rapid  
3 care team;

4 (e) Any barriers that are preventing children in crisis from  
5 safely exiting the hospital setting when there is not a medical need  
6 for that hospital stay;

7 (f) Any barriers that are preventing children in crisis who are  
8 dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW from maintaining an appropriate and  
9 stable placement;

10 (g) Recommendations for earlier intervention to prevent children  
11 from becoming children in crisis;

12 (h) Discussion regarding the implementation of youth behavioral  
13 health and inpatient navigator programs and their role in serving  
14 children in crisis; and

15 (i) Recommendations for systemic changes that could replace the  
16 rapid care team in addressing complex cases involving a child in  
17 crisis.

18 (7) The following definitions apply to this section:

19 (a) "Child in crisis" means a person under age 18 who is:

20 (i) At risk of remaining in a hospital without medical necessity,  
21 without the ability to return to the care of a parent, and not  
22 dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW;

23 (ii) Staying in a hospital without medical necessity and who is  
24 unable to return to the care of a parent but is not dependent under  
25 chapter 13.34 RCW; or

26 (iii) Dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW, experiencing placement  
27 instability, and referred to the rapid care team by the department of  
28 children, youth, and families.

29 (b) "Rapid care team" means a team, whose work is managed and  
30 directed by the children and youth multisystem care (~~coordinator~~)  
31 project director created under this section, working to quickly  
32 identify the appropriate services and living arrangements for a child  
33 in crisis. A rapid care team must include:

34 (i) One designee from the health care authority;

35 (ii) One designee from the department of social and health  
36 services;

37 (iii) One designee from the office of financial management;

38 (iv) One designee from the developmental disabilities  
39 administration of the department of social and health services;

1 (v) One designee from the department of children, youth, and  
2 families; and

3 (vi) Any other entities, including governmental entities and  
4 managed care organizations, or individuals, including clinicians and  
5 other service providers, that the children and youth multisystem care  
6 (~~coordinator~~) project director deems appropriate to support a child  
7 in crisis.

8 (8) This section expires June 30, (~~2025~~) 2027.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** 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. 3.** 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, 2025, in the omnibus appropriations act, this  
16 act is null and void.

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