
HOUSE BILL 2453

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Jenkins, Rodne, Cody, Schmick, Chandler, and
Dunshee

1 AN ACT Relating to improving oversight of the state hospitals;
2 and adding a new chapter to Title 72 RCW.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The position of the legislative state
5 hospital authority is created. The legislative state hospital
6 authority shall serve as a consultant to the legislature on funding
7 and policy matters related to the state hospitals and as an oversight
8 authority over the operations and management of the state hospitals.

9 (2) The legislative state hospital authority shall be appointed
10 by, and shall report to, the joint select committee on state hospital
11 oversight created in section 2 of this act.

12 (3) The legislative state hospital authority must be a nationally
13 recognized expert on publicly funded mental health systems, with
14 particular expertise in the legal, policy, and fiscal aspects of
15 operating public facilities that provide involuntary inpatient mental
16 health treatment to civil and forensic mental health patients, and
17 must be capable of carrying out the responsibilities identified in
18 this section.

19 (4) The legislative state hospital authority must monitor the
20 operations of the state hospitals. Monitoring includes, at a minimum:

1 (a) Reviewing the policies and procedures established and
2 practiced by the department of social and health services to carry
3 out its responsibilities in delivering state hospital services;

4 (b) Reviewing the implementation of applicable federal, state,
5 and local laws;

6 (c) Assessing facility operations including, but not limited to,
7 hospital safety, timely provision of services, management practices,
8 and sufficiency of staffing models; and

9 (d) Investigating inquiries by the joint select committee on
10 state hospital oversight.

11 (5) To the extent necessary to maintain or achieve operational
12 stability and legal compliance at the state hospitals, the
13 legislative state hospital authority may:

14 (a) Recommend or require reprioritization of expenditures of
15 appropriated funding within the direction established by the
16 legislature; and

17 (b) Recommend or require modifications of agency practices and
18 policies.

19 (6) The legislative state hospital authority must submit reports
20 at regular intervals to the joint select committee on state hospital
21 oversight containing, at a minimum, the following information:

22 (a) An overview and analysis of the information collected during
23 monitoring;

24 (b) Required or recommended changes in agency policies,
25 practices, or funding priorities, if any; and

26 (c) Recommendations for legislative changes, if any.

27 (7) As needed to carry out his or her oversight, reporting, and
28 advisory functions, the legislative state hospital authority must be
29 granted physical access to the state hospitals and access to all
30 relevant information and databases in the possession of the
31 department of social and health services and the health care
32 authority related to the administration of mental health services at
33 the state hospitals. The legislative state hospital authority shall
34 maintain the confidentiality of information that by law is
35 confidential or privileged.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) A joint select committee on state
37 hospital oversight is established, with members as identified in this
38 subsection:

1 (i) Six members of the senate, consisting of the chair and
2 ranking member of the committees on health care, human services,
3 mental health and housing, and ways and means, or their successor
4 committees. The president of the senate shall select one of the
5 senate members serving on the joint select committee to serve as
6 cochair.

7 (ii) Six members of the house of representatives, consisting of
8 the chair and ranking member of the committees on health care,
9 judiciary, and appropriations, or their successor committees. The
10 speaker of the house of representatives shall select one of the house
11 of representatives members serving on the joint select committee to
12 serve as cochair.

13 (b) The cochairs shall convene the initial meeting of the joint
14 select committee.

15 (2) The joint select committee shall:

16 (a) Review candidates and contract for the services of a
17 legislative state hospital authority as described in section 1 of
18 this act;

19 (b) Receive reports from the legislative state hospital authority
20 regarding the operations of the state hospitals;

21 (c) Submit specific investigative inquiries to the legislative
22 state hospital authority, as needed; and

23 (d) Make recommendations for legislative changes based on the
24 legislative state hospital authority's findings and recommendations.

25 (3) Staff support for the committee must be provided by the
26 senate committee services and the house of representatives office of
27 program research.

28 (4) Legislative members of the committee must be reimbursed for
29 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

30 (5) The expenses of the committee must be paid jointly by the
31 senate and the house of representatives. Committee expenditures are
32 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee
33 and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their
34 successor committees.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** For purposes of this chapter "state
36 hospitals" refers to eastern state hospital and western state
37 hospital as designated in RCW 72.23.020.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Sections 1 through 3 of this act
2 constitute a new chapter in Title 72 RCW.

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