

SB 418: Legislative Mental Health Investments

Study Plan

Adopted by the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee
on June 3, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The 2015 Legislature approved Senate Bill 418 to implement a number of provisions of House Bill 2, the main appropriations bill for the next two-year budget period. The conference committee on SB 418 amended the bill late in the session to direct the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to meet several objectives for mental health services, because of the nearly \$16 million in new funding that the 2015 Legislature provided for mental health services in the upcoming biennium.

The amendment also required the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee to:

- monitor and evaluate the department's implementation of the objectives;
- provide a report to the 2017 Legislature that outlines the status of implementation; and
- identify areas where continued improvement is needed.

Because these duties were included in legislation rather than a study resolution, the committee must undertake the activities as part of its interim work.

LEGISLATIVE MENTAL HEALTH INVESTMENTS

During the 2013-2014 interim, the Children and Families Committee studied mental health services at the state-operated institutions. The study resulted in a number of bills to appropriate money for crisis intervention services designed to bolster community-based services and relieve pressure on the state facilities. The 2015 Legislature approved four of the bills and also appropriated additional funds for mental health.

The four bills from the 2013-14 interim committee appropriated \$5.4 million to continue or expand existing community services or pay for new community-based treatment. Additional appropriations for community mental health services in House Bill 2 totaled \$9.35 million.

The 2015 Legislature approved the following bills:

- HB 33, appropriating \$2 million for additional matching grants to counties that want to undertake jail diversion and crisis intervention services, with the money to be used primarily for new services;

- HB 34, appropriating \$1.2 million in additional funds for secure psychiatric detention beds in the community, in anticipation of new community facilities opening their doors;
- HB 35, appropriating \$1 million to pay for up to 14 days of voluntary short-term inpatient mental health treatment in a community for an individual who otherwise is facing involuntary commitment to the Montana State Hospital at Warm Springs; and
- HB 47, appropriating \$1.2 million for grants to children's mental health providers for youth crisis diversion activities.

House Bill 2 appropriates the following amounts for other community-based services:

- \$3 million to increase the number of slots available in the mental health community-based services waiver;
- \$1 million for additional 72-hour crisis intervention costs;
- \$600,000 for housing re-entry;
- \$500,000 for peer support services;
- \$500,000 for existing community-based programs and facilities that are currently receiving county matching grants for jail diversion and crisis intervention activities;
- \$250,000 for youth suicide prevention grants; and
- \$3.5 million for transitional mental health group homes. The funding for these group homes remained in HB 2 although a companion bill died. HB 24 would have required that the money be used for community-based group homes for individuals who had been in the criminal justice system and either were found not guilty because of a mental illness or were convicted but sentenced to DPHHS custody because they were mentally ill at the time they committed the crime. The House Bill 2 appropriation does not contain similar requirements.

In addition, although the Legislature did not approve money for construction of proposed new beds at the Montana State Hospital and the Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center in Lewistown, HB 2 still contains \$4 million in Fiscal Year 2017 to pay for the operational costs associated with the proposed facilities.

STUDY TASKS

The requirements of SB 418 essentially create another study for the Committee. SB 418 requires the Committee to monitor and evaluate how well DPHHS implements the following objectives:

- increase use of community-based crisis intervention services to reduce short-term admissions to the Montana State Hospital;
- reimburse providers for effective prevention and treatment that enables sustainable recovery in communities, as shown through quality assurance activities and analyses;
- improve outcomes for individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance disorders, as demonstrated through data collection on individual client outcomes for recovery markers and performance measures; and
- improve collaboration between community mental health providers, nursing homes, and state-run facilities, as demonstrated through an increase in state facility discharge rates with a corresponding decrease in client recidivism to state facilities.

The Committee must provide a report to the 2017 Legislature to outline the status of implementation and identify areas where continued improvement is necessary.

STUDY RESOURCES

Because SB 418 directs DPHHS to meet specific objectives, the agency will serve as the main resource for the study. The Addictive and Mental Disorders Division of the agency will oversee most of the spending authorized during the 2015 biennium. The Children's Mental Health Bureau in the Developmental Services Division will be responsible for making youth suicide prevention and youth crisis diversion grants.

The counties and programs that receive the funds also will be a resource to the Committee as it reviews the extent to which communities and providers have sought and used the new funding.

OUTLINE OF STUDY ACTIVITIES

The study will include the following basic activities during the time periods noted:

1. **Compile background information: June 2015 through March 2016.** During this time period, the Committee will receive more information on the specific mental health investments made by the 2015 Legislature and the steps DPHHS is taking to make grants or other payments for community-based services. Activities will include:

- a. staff briefing papers on the 2015 legislative mental health investments and on admissions to and discharges from state and community mental health facilities;
 - b. presentations by DPHHS on the use of the funds, the administrative rules required because of 2015 legislation, the reimbursement methods used by the department, and measurement of the objectives established in SB 418;
 - c. panel presentations by representatives of counties and community mental health providers; and
 - d. public comment opportunities.
2. **Identify issues: March through June 2016.** Study activities during this period will include a review of the information compiled to date and Committee identification of how it will evaluate implementation of the SB 418 objectives.
 3. **Evaluate implementation and identify report findings: May 2016 through August 2016.** The Committee will evaluate the implementation efforts, identify findings for its report to the 2017 Legislature, identify any continued improvements that members believe are necessary, and approve the final report to the Legislature. The Committee may also decide to propose legislation related to this study.

The table on the following page provides a list of anticipated study activities and resources, as well as tentative dates for the activities and the amount of Committee meeting time each activity is expected to entail. The Committee will devote about 15% of its meeting time to SB 418 activities.

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Study Activity	Source	Activity	Meeting Date	Committee Time
(1) Review information on actions by the 2015 Legislature, status of implementation to date, and DPHHS measurement of objectiveness	Staff research, DPHHS	Staff materials and agency presentations	September 2015	2 hours
(2) Review information on status of implementation to date, reimbursement for sustainable recovery, and data collected for measuring outcomes	DPHHS	Agency presentations	November 2015	2 hours
(3) Review information on status of implementation to date and on admission, discharge, and recidivism rates at Montana State Hospital and community facilities	Staff research, DPHHS, stakeholders	Staff materials and panel presentations	January 2016	1.5 hours
(4) Review information on new community services, use of community services, and provider experiences with reimbursement and collaboration	Staff research, DPHHS, stakeholders	Presentations	March 2016	2.5 hours
(5) Evaluate implementation and identify preliminary findings, potential areas for continued improvement, and other resources for mental health services	Committee members	Information as requested by committee	May 2016	2 hours
(6) Complete evaluation of implementation, identify and draft legislation as necessary, and approve report to 2017 Legislature	Committee members	Committee work sessions	June and August 2016	2 hours
			Total	12 hours