

## Highlights from the 2018 legislative session

### Bills

**Improving access to mental health services for children - HB2779:** HB2779 re-establishes and expands the make-up of the Children's Mental Health Work Group through December 2020. Additionally, the bill:

- Allows provider reimbursement for supervision and partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient treatment programs
- Directs the Health Care Authority and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to develop strategies for expanding home visiting.
- Directs an advisory group to make recommendations regarding Parent-Initiated Treatment and Age of Consent
- Requires the delivery of mental health instruction in two high school pilot sites
- Requires that the workgroup monitor implementation of programs and policies related to children's mental health

**Expanding the activities of the children's' mental health consultation program - SB6452:** SB 6452 directs the Health Care Authority work with the University of Washington Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Seattle Children's Hospital to implement the Partnership Access Line (PAL) for Moms and Kids.

PAL for Moms and Kids will include support for health care professionals who provide care to pregnant women and new mothers as well as assistance for parents and guardians seeking mental health services for their child or children. The goal of the bill is to better ensure that parents are able to find mental health resources for their children, as well as prevent the negative consequences of maternal depression.

**Extending the timeline for completing a Family Assessment Response - SB6309:** SB6309 updates and improves the existing Child Protective Services pathway known as Family Assessment Response. Instead of having to complete services and close a case within 90 days, the case will now be able to remain open for 120 days, allowing parents access to more effective, evidence based programs, thereby decreasing the likelihood of re-entering the CPS system.

**Budgeting for the core state services for children - HB2008:** HB2008 brings critical services (intensive services for children and youth known as Behavioral Rehabilitative Services, and parent child visitation, and child protective services) into the forecasting process. This is how the state gets a regular sense of how many children, youth, and/or families will likely require certain services, and as a result,

be able to budget more accurately in order to meet the need. The goal of this legislation is to bring stability and predictability into some of the most critical aspects of the child welfare system.

**Expanding eligibility for extended foster care – SB6222:** SB6222 will allow youth who have been prohibited from access extended foster care (the ability to stay in care until age 21) to now be able to participate in this critical program. Specifically, the definition of eligibility is changing from having to be in foster care at the time the youth reaches age 18 to having to be a dependent of the state at that point in time. For example, a youth who was in foster care but then ended up in a juvenile rehabilitation facility, such as Echo Glen, would no longer be in foster care but would still be a dependent of the state. Under current law the youth would not be eligible for extended foster care upon leaving the JR facility but under the new law they will be!

Additionally, the bill will allow a youth to un-enroll and re-enroll in extended foster care an unlimited number of times, as opposed to the current law that restricts such ability.

**Helping foster and homeless youth complete apprenticeships and utilize the Passport to College Promise program – SB6274:** SB6274 establishes the Passport to Careers program that has two pathways – the Passport to College Promise scholarship program and the Passport to Apprenticeship Opportunities program. The Passport to Careers program must provide financial support and financial assistance to former foster and unaccompanied homeless youth in pursuing postsecondary options in higher education or are registered apprenticeship. Eligibility for Passport to College Promise is expanded to include youth who have experienced homelessness and individuals who have spent a day or more in state, federal, or tribal foster care. This legislation will allow more youth to engage in post-secondary education and as a result, hopefully move into livable wage employment opportunities.

**Private case management of child welfare services – SB6407:** SB6407 repeals outdated and previously controversial legislation geared towards improving the child welfare system. With the new Dept. of Children, Youth, and Families opening its doors on July 1, 2018, it was agreed that the focus needs to be on that and implementing the new agency in a way that improves outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Additionally, SB6407 requires the expansion of entities called Network Administrators (NA) and establishes that NA manage the entire family support and related service array within the geographic boundaries of a given network. And, in order to better ensure transparency and accountability, the DCYF is directed to share all relevant data with the network administrators and make all performance data available to the public; consider the value of the existing data platform for child welfare services in determining the cost

estimates for expanded network administrator implementation; and annually submit to the Oversight Board and the appropriate committees of the Legislature a report detailing the status of the network administrator procurement and implementation process.

**Legal Support for Kinship Caregivers – SB6453:** SB6453 authorizes the Dept. of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) to purchase legal representation for kinship caregivers involved in non-parental actions for child custody. Under current law this was not allowed. Passage of Sb6453 should result in permanency for children living with relatives and greater legal protection for relatives raising children.

**Foster Parent Rights and Responsibilities – HB2785:** The requirement that the DCYF provide foster parents with a list of foster parent rights and responsibilities on the DCYF website and in writing at the time of licensure is modified to also require the list be provided to foster parents at orientation before licensure and at license renewal.

**Transferring all aspects of Working Connections Child Care and Seasonal Child Care service delivery to the DCYF – HB2816:** Recognizing the culture shift underway with respect to the new Dept. of Children, Youth, and Families, it was determined that the state's subsidized child care programs should be administered under its auspice as opposed to remaining at DSHS. This transfer should allow for a more cohesive service delivery system, recognizing the need many families have for both child welfare and early learning services.

**Foster youth health care benefits – HB2530:** HB2530 will enable a parent or guardian of a child who is no longer a dependent (of the state) child to continue enrollment in the integrated managed health care plan for foster children for up to 12 months following reunification with the child's parents or guardian as long as other eligibility criteria are met (the child is under 18, was in foster care, and meets income and other requirements for medical assistance coverage). This legislation will allow for a smoother transition back home and better ensure continuity of physical and mental health services that were in place while the child was in foster care.

**Allowing minors to consent to share their identifying information in the WA Homeless Client Management Information System – HB1630:** HB1630 does just what the title of the bill states – It allows unaccompanied youth aged 13 and older to give consent for the collection of personally identifying information for the Washington Homeless Client Management Information System. It was agreed that in order to better serve this population of youth, having a way to identify who they are was essential. This will allow for greater and more effective data collection and service coordination.

**Preserving and expanding rental housing options for persons whose source of income is from or includes sources other than employment – HB2578:** HB2578 prohibits a landlord from discriminating, making any distinction, or restricting

against a prospective or current tenant based on the source of income. "Source of income" includes housing assistance, public assistance, emergency rental assistance, veterans benefits, social security, supplemental security income, retirement programs, and other programs administered by any federal, state, local, or non-profit entity. It does not, however, include income derived in an illegal manner.

Additionally, the legislation creates the Landlord Mitigation Program account and states that expenditures from the account may only be used for the Landlord Mitigation Program to reimburse for the damages caused to private market rental units.

Passage of HB2578 should open up more housing options for low income individuals and families, including families involved in the child welfare system.

**Ensuring that no youth is discharged from a publicly funded system of care (such as foster care) into homelessness – SB6560:** SB6560 establishes that it is the goal of the legislature that any youth discharged from a public system of care will be discharged into safe and stable housing. It requires DCYF to jointly develop a plan to ensure that the goal is realized with the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs. Additionally, the legislation requires the Dept. of Licensing to issue an identicard at the cost of production to individuals scheduled for release from a juvenile rehabilitation institution or facility within 30 days and individuals released from those facilities within the last 30 days.

**Establishing the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force – HB1482:** HB1482 establishes the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force and eliminates the existing Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force. The legislation also creates the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee, which is charged with developing a five-year plan to address intergenerational poverty and promote self-sufficiency. Subject to oversight and approval by the Task Force, the DSHS must submit the plan to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2019.

This legislation shifts the focus of the existing WorkFirst Task Force from solely looking at the WorkFirst program to addressing poverty reduction, particularly intergenerational poverty. The Task Force is intended to work closely with the Advisory Committee.

**Revising resource limits for public assistance – HB1831:** HB1831 changes the resource limit for motor vehicles and other resources that are calculated when a person applies for public assistance. Previous the value of a motor vehicle could be no more than \$5000, and all other assets totaling no more than \$1000. The limits will now be \$10,000 for a vehicle and \$6,000 for all other. This change will allow

families to retain slightly more of their assets and still be able to qualify for assistance.

### **Budget Items**

[Total funds are indicated]

**TANF grant increase - \$9.058m** -- Beginning in FY 2019, funding is provided for a 6.8 percent increase in the grant standard for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), State Family Assistance (SFA), and Refugee Cash Assistance (RA) programs. When combined with the 2.5 percent increase which will also take effect on July 1, 2018, the maximum TANF grant for a family of four is increased from \$613 per month to \$671 per month.

**BRS rates -- \$6.343m** – Funding is for rate increases, as well as \$100,000 for a workgroup to design a rate payment methodology based on the actual costs of care, and \$110,000 for the Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability to develop a validated tool to assess the care needs of foster children, including whether BRS should be provided.

**Implementation of DCYF -- \$2.405m** -- Funding is provided to support implementation of the new Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). DCYF must submit an expenditure plan to OFM and may expend implementation funds after receiving approval from the Director of OFM. Additionally, funding is provided for staff and expenses for the Oversight Board, which is tasked with monitoring and ensuring that the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) achieves its stated outcomes.

**Home visiting expansion -- \$2.299m** -- Funding is provided to equalize existing home visiting service provider rates and expand services to additional families in FY 2019.

**Relative search staff -- \$696,000** -- Funding is provided to hire 6.5 relative search FTEs effective July 1, 2018. The staff are anticipated to reduce the backlog of relative search referrals and facilitate appropriate placements of dependent children with relatives when appropriate.

**Families in crisis study -- \$150,000** -- Funding is provided for a study on the public system response for families and youth in crisis who are seeking services to address family conflict. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families, in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and local jurisdictions, will develop recommendations to improve the delivery of services, including potential changes to the at-risk youth and child and need of services petition processes, and family reconciliation services.

**Child care consultation plan - \$50,000** -- One-time funding is provided for DCYF to submit a report with options and recommendations for a plan to provide nurse consultation services to licensed child care providers who request assistance in addressing the health and behavioral needs of children in their care.

**Emergent placement options -- \$848,000** -- Ongoing funding is provided for 10 Emergent Placement Contract (EPC) beds that the CA initiated in November 2017. The additional beds bring the total number of EPC beds to 34. The EPC beds are short-term placements that provide an alternative to the use of hotels for children in foster care.

**Tribal Kinship Navigators - \$245,000** -- Tribal Kinship Navigator Funding is increased for the Tribal Kinship Navigator program to serve the Yakama Nation, Colville Indian reservation, and other tribal areas.  
**Pediatric primary care Medicaid rate -- \$13.844m** -- Funding is provided to increase pediatric primary care rates for the same set of evaluation and management and vaccine administration codes that were included in the temporary rate increase provided by the patient protection and affordable care act.

**Homeless youth resource portal -- \$20,000** -- Funding is provided for the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs to conduct a survey of homeless youth service and informational gaps.

**Fathers and Family reunification -- \$125,000** -- Funding is provided for a grant to a nonprofit organization to assist fathers transitioning from incarceration to family reunification.

**Dually involved females -- \$100,000** - Funding is provided for the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to conduct a study on the needs of females who are dually involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. WSIPP is to report its findings to the appropriate legislative fiscal and policy committees by July 1, 2019.

**Prevention Pilot -- \$250,000** -- Funding is provided solely for the DCYF to contract with a county-wide nonprofit organization with early childhood expertise in Pierce county for a pilot project that convenes stakeholders to develop and plan an intervention using the help me grow model to prevent child abuse and neglect.

**Education outcomes** – No funding, however, there was language included in the budget to do the following:  
The department of children, youth, and families in collaboration with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the department of commerce office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs, and the student achievement council must convene a work group with aligned nongovernmental agencies, including a statewide nonprofit coalition that is representative of communities of

color and low-income communities focused on educational equity, to create a plan for children and youth in foster care and children and youth experiencing homelessness to facilitate educational equity with their general student population peers and to close the disparities between racial and ethnic groups by 2027. The specific duties of the workgroup are spelled out in the budget proviso.

