

CS for HB 346

SPONSOR STATEMENT

An act relating to services for persons with developmental disabilities

This bill helps address the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by requiring the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities to conduct periodic reviews of their wait list and by requiring an annual report to the legislature and governor regarding the same. For some time now there have been more individuals with developmental disabilities requesting services than there are available resources to provide those services. Thus, in 1989 the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities began a waitlist for individuals waiting for services. The waitlist is the Division's way of prioritizing individual requests and is the gateway to services. There are presently 786 people on the developmental disabilities waitlist and 333 on the Infant Learning Program waitlist.

The CS to HB 346 only makes some minor changes to the original bill. The title has been changed to more accurately represent the purpose of the bill. The second amendment changes Section 1(d)(3) by deleting language that the division is not required to collect. This section now asks for the basic demographic information across all regions about the age, sex, and racial and ethnic background of the individuals on the waiting list. The last amendment changes section 1 (d)(8) to allow the department to provide copies of the department's policies, manuals and procedures in either written or electronic form. The amendment added the option of providing the data in electronic format.

In the future, it is estimated that the need for services for individuals with developmental disabilities will continue to grow faster than available resources. In order to meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, planning regarding the wait list and available services must continue. Effective planning requires the collection and analysis of relevant data regarding people who are currently receiving services, the length of time it takes to obtain services, and the effectiveness of the services received, among other things. This bill will require the collection and dissemination of this data to relevant parties. There is a zero fiscal note for this bill.

In order to make the best use of available resources and to ensure fair administration of the waitlist, this bill will establish periodic reviews of the wait list along with an annual report to the legislature and governor. The periodic reviews will ensure individuals with developmental disabilities and their families that the waitlist is being fairly administered, reviewed, and updated on a regular basis. The information provided in the annual report will be useful to the individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, the administration, the legislature and a variety of service agencies. Additionally, the bill will require the Division to establish written procedures and consumer information that will be available to aid the general public. Currently, this is a fifty million-dollar industry without uniform statewide information available to the public who accesses and uses the service. This new information will greatly benefit the public.