

SB 686 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Prepared By: C. Ross, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 3/23, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires certain licensed hospitals, state hospitals and secure intensive community inpatient facilities to offer a choice to individuals receiving inpatient psychiatric services, to receive care in-person and on-site or electronically, and to inform individuals of their right to choose.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of interpersonal connection and engagement for hospitalized persons; need for physical access to family and providers
- Extreme vulnerability of hospitalized individuals; disorientation; trauma
- Individuals that are unable to relate only visually/remotely, especially those with complex needs
- Importance of personal decision-making; providing individuals with some element of control
- Need to maintain safety for patients and providers during pandemic
- Need for flexibility of telehealth where appropriate; positive impact of telehealth on provider shortage
- Supporting the intent of the measure; ongoing conversations; potential amendment

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

[-2 amendment dated 4/7/21] Replaces the measure; narrows scope and provides exceptions. Requires secure residential treatment facilities and secure psychiatric units of acute and subacute hospitals to provide individuals with a choice of in-person contact with an on-site provider for the purpose of prescribing medications. Requires facilities: to notify individuals of the choice orally and in writing; to provide information about how to report a facility's failure to offer a choice, and/or its failure to respect a choice; and to document decisions. Provides exceptions: when individuals are located in OHA-designated provider shortage areas and no prescribing provider is available to appear on site, or when individuals are located in areas where an emergency has been declared or a natural disaster has occurred and no prescribing provider is available to appear on site. Defines terms.

BACKGROUND:

In order to combat the transmission of COVID-19 during the pandemic in 2020, all manner of congregate care settings imposed restrictions or outright prohibitions on physical contact and physical proximity between residents, providers, staff, and visitors, consistent with public health and safety guidelines. In-person contact and delivery of services is considered especially critical to the success of comprehensive treatment and support of persons receiving inpatient psychiatric care.

Senate Bill 686 requires certain inpatient facilities to inform individuals receiving inpatient services that they have a right to choose, and to provide care as chosen by the individual, either electronically or in-person.