

Senate Bill No. 1748

CHAPTER 814

An act to add Section 4341.1 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to mental health.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2000. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2000.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1748, Perata. Mental health services programs.

Existing law requires the State Department of Mental Health to administer various mental health programs.

This bill would specify the representatives of the task force funded by the Budget Act of 2000 to address and identify options for meeting the staffing needs of state and county health, human services, and criminal justice agencies, and would require the task force, among other things, to study the shortage of mental health workers in publicly funded mental health services and develop recommendations for expansion of their services, including the establishment of regional training centers that would perform prescribed functions. It would require the department to provide staffing for the task force and would also require the task force to issue a progress report to the Legislature on its findings on or before May 1, 2001, and to issue a final report to the Legislature on or before May 1, 2002.

The bill would require the department to establish a grant program for students in California colleges and universities that offer graduate school programs leading to certain degrees in order to attract students into employment in publicly funded mental health services. It would also require the department to offer forgivable loans to current full-time employees of counties and to full-time employees of nonprofit agencies whose services are funded primarily through county mental health contracts and who meet other specified criteria.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) There is a growing shortage of mental health professionals, and there is a need for more qualified mental health professionals throughout California.



(b) Public mental health programs have difficulty recruiting and retaining high quality staff for rural areas or large populations of low-income and linguistic minority families.

(c) The rising costs of higher education, coupled with a shift in available financial aid from scholarships and grants to loans, make loan repayment options an important consideration in a student's decision to pursue a postsecondary education.

(d) The availability of financial aid and loan repayment assistance are important considerations for many students, especially economically disadvantaged students, in making their educational decisions.

SEC. 2. Section 4341.1 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

4341.1. (a) The task force funded by Schedule (a) of Item 4440-001-0001 of Section 2.00 of the Budget Act of 2000 (Ch. 52, Stats. 2000) to address and identify options for meeting the staffing needs of state and county health, human services, and criminal justice agencies shall include a representative from the State Department of Mental Health, who shall serve as chair, the Secretary of the Health and Human Services Agency or his or her designee, a representative of the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency, the Secretary for Education or his or her designee, a representative of the California Mental Health Planning Council, and representatives of the University of California, including the University of California medical schools and medical residency training programs, the California State University, the California Community Colleges, the California School Boards Association, the Association of California School Administrators, the Medical Board of California, the Board of Behavioral Sciences, the Board of Psychology, the California Mental Health Directors Association, the California Council of Community Mental Health Agencies, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill-California, the California Network of Mental Health Clients, the United Advocates for Children of California, and the California Alliance of Child and Family Services. The State Department of Mental Health shall provide staff to the task force.

(b) The task force shall do all of the following:

(1) Study the shortage of mental health workers in publicly funded mental health services and develop recommendations for expansion of all of the following:

(A) Programs such as the Human Services Academy currently established by the Mental Health Association of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District to offer high school students education about mental health problems, services, and information about the meaning and value to society of service in publicly funded mental health care.

(B) Programs that expand graduate school programs.



(C) Ways to expand the utilization of those who have been consumers of mental health services.

(D) Ways to engage community college students, four-year college undergraduates, and college graduates in careers leading to mental health service.

(E) Efforts to change the curriculum of programs, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate, including medical residency programs, that could lead to employment in public mental health programs to make sure there is clinical training and education that complements and supports employment in public mental health programs.

(F) Revisions, as may be necessary, to licensing requirements including recommendations for proposed legislation, and scope of practice issues that maximize the opportunity to utilize consumers and are consistent with the types of services likely to be required to serve seriously emotionally disturbed children and severely mentally ill adults who need a wide array of services as set forth in the children's and adults' systems of care.

(G) Financial supports in the form of stipends, loan forgiveness, or other programs that could be accomplished through state or federal funds that would further support the need for employment.

(2) Annually quantify the need for different types of providers in different regions of the state including the cost, positions, and projected future needs.

(3) Evaluate the impact of competition from the private sector on the availability of mental health professionals in the public sector.

(4) Address other issues of collaboration and coordination between the educational system, the licensing boards, and the mental health system that are impeding progress in expanding the mental health workforce.

(5) Address issues of collaboration and coordination within the various levels of the educational system that are impeding progress in expanding the mental health workforce.

(6) Develop recommendations to ensure all of the following:

(A) Two-year and four-year colleges have sufficient capacity to train all the mental health staff needed.

(B) Issues that obstruct development of a career ladder between two-year and four-year schools are eliminated.

(C) Community college programs have clear delineation of both skills and theory that need to be mastered for each type of position.

(D) There are new certificate programs for psychosocial rehabilitation at the community college level and post baccalaureate case management.

(7) Examine options for collaboration on curriculum between employees in the public mental health system, and high schools, community colleges, and undergraduate and graduate education programs.



(c) The task force shall issue a progress report to the Legislature on its findings on or before May 1, 2001, and shall issue a final report to the Legislature on or before May 1, 2002.

O

