

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 4, 2000

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1999–2000 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2228

Introduced by Assembly Member Aroner

February 24, 2000

An act relating to mental health, *and making an appropriation therefor.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2228, as amended, Aroner. Juvenile offenders: mental health screening.

Existing law, the Arnold-Kennick Juvenile Court Law, provides for the adjudication of a minor as a ward of the juvenile court on the basis of criminal or certain noncriminal behavior.

Existing law also directs county mental health departments that receive specified funding to provide mental health screening, assessment, and other services to the extent resources are available to children served by county social services and probation departments.

This bill would *establish the Juvenile Probation Assessment Pilot Project to be administered by the State Department of Mental Health in an unspecified number of counties, for 3 years. The project would require, in order to be eligible for the program, a county probation department to develop a local plan for assessing the service needs of minors in the county who have been arrested or cited on charges based on criminal conduct. The bill would appropriate an unspecified sum to the*

State Department of Mental Health for these purposes. The bill would also express the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to provide appropriate screening and assessment of juvenile offenders to detect mental or emotional disorders, and to provide a continuum of appropriate mental health services for juvenile offenders at the local level.

Vote: ~~majority~~ ^{2/3}. Appropriation: ~~no~~ yes. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~ yes. State-mandated local program: no.

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

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

3 (a) The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and
4 Delinquency Prevention estimates that 60 percent of
5 young people in the juvenile system suffer from
6 behavioral, mental, or emotional disorders.

7 (b) The National Mental Health Association reports
8 that, according to data obtained from site visits to a
9 nationally representative sample of 95 public and private
10 juvenile facilities, 73 percent of the young people in those
11 facilities reported mental health problems, and 57
12 percent reported that they had been previously treated
13 for mental health problems.

14 ~~(c)~~

15 (1) The prevalence of mental disorders among young
16 people in juvenile justice facilities ranges from 50 percent
17 to 75 percent.

18 ~~(d)~~

19 (2) From one-quarter to one-third of the young people
20 suffered from anxiety or mood disorders, nearly one-third
21 of the girls suffered from posttraumatic stress syndrome,
22 and up to 19 percent of the young people may be suicidal.

23 ~~(e)~~

24 (3) Young people with learning disabilities or serious
25 emotional problems are arrested at higher rates than
26 other young people who do not suffer from those
27 disabilities.

28 ~~(f)~~



1 (4) Young people involved with the juvenile justice
2 system have substantially higher rates of mental disorders
3 than young people in the general population.

4 ~~(g)~~

5 (c) Many young people involved in the juvenile justice
6 system in California suffer from mental health problems,
7 substance abuse problems, and other problems that
8 frequently are undiagnosed or untreated due to the lack
9 of proper screening and assessment or the unavailability
10 of appropriate treatment resources.

11 ~~(h)~~

12 (d) The Legislature recognizes the value of
13 comprehensive strength-based assessments and
14 coordination of appropriate services for young people
15 and their families, including intensive followup to ensure
16 the availability and accessibility of services.

17 Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to enact
18 legislation that will provide appropriate screening and
19 assessment of juvenile offenders to detect mental or
20 emotional disorders, and to provide a continuum of
21 appropriate mental health services for juvenile offenders
22 at the local level.

23 *SEC. 2. There is hereby established the Juvenile*
24 *Probation Assessment Pilot Project to be administered by*
25 *the State Department of Mental Health in _____*
26 *counties. The project shall be in effect for three years.*

27 (b) *In order to be eligible for this program, a county*
28 *probation department shall comply with guidelines set*
29 *out by the department and shall develop a local plan for*
30 *assessing the service needs of minors in the county who*
31 *have been arrested or cited on charges that bring them*
32 *within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court pursuant to*
33 *Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.*

34 *The local plan shall provide for the development and*
35 *application of uniform screening and needs assessment*
36 *instruments and protocols to be administered to minors*
37 *coming within the provisions of this section, including*
38 *provisions for the uniform collection of demographic*
39 *information and the minor's history of substance abuse,*
40 *mental health, health, education, and information on the*



1 minor's family history and offense history. The screening
2 and assessment instruments shall be strength based and
3 meet the minimum guidelines established by the
4 department.

5 The local plan shall contain provisions for screening
6 minors within timeframes identified by the department,
7 and shall make provisions for referring minors for a more
8 extensive assessment, including evaluation by the county
9 probation assessment team.

10 The local plan shall include provisions for a county
11 probation assessment team that at a minimum includes
12 representatives from the county probation department
13 which shall act as the lead, and from the county mental
14 health department, the county office of education, and
15 local substance abuse and health programs. To the extent
16 practicable, the assessment team shall also involve county
17 social services, foster youth services, and other local
18 programs serving delinquent or at-risk youth.

19 The local plan shall include protocols for the referral of
20 minors who have been screened and determined to need
21 additional assessment. These assessments shall be used for
22 developing case plans or referrals to service, to the extent
23 that local resources are available. Referral to programs
24 and services should be consistent with the minor's
25 individual needs, and the safety of the community.

26 The local plan shall identify provisions for staff who
27 administer the screening and assessment instruments
28 identified in this section, and specify the prior education
29 and training of those staff. The plan shall also contain
30 provisions for the ongoing training of staff involved in the
31 program, including guidelines established by the
32 department.

33 (c) The department, in consultation with the pilot
34 counties and other individuals or organizations with
35 expert knowledge regarding the assessment of juvenile
36 offenders, shall develop minimum screening and
37 assessment instruments and protocols to be used by pilot
38 counties. The department shall provide technical
39 assistance to the pilot counties, including training relative
40 to quality screening and assessment of minors.



1 The department shall establish minimum standards,
2 funding schedules, procedures for the collection of data,
3 and the review and approval of a local plan developed
4 pursuant to subdivision (b).

5 County probation departments involved in this pilot
6 project are authorized to release information to the
7 department regarding minors involved in the program
8 for purposes of oversight and evaluation.

9 (d) County probation departments involved in this
10 pilot project shall use data collected through the
11 screening and assessment process to identify service
12 needs of juveniles in the county, and work in
13 collaboration with the assessment team to develop a plan
14 for developing an appropriate continuum of treatment
15 services. They shall also identify existing local, state,
16 federal, and private resources that may be used to fund
17 these services.

18 (e) The funding schedule developed by the
19 department shall include a set rate allocated to counties
20 for screening and for assessing minors identified in this
21 section, and an allocation for staff training administration.

22 (f) The pilot project shall be evaluated independently
23 to judge the effectiveness of the screening and assessment
24 protocol and processes used to implement the programs,
25 including whether the assessments and screenings
26 provide adequate background data on the minor and the
27 minor's family unit, improve achievement of case plan
28 goals, are judged useful to counties and services
29 providers, and can be applied with ease.

30 (g) Upon satisfactory completion of the pilot project
31 described in this section and development of formal
32 screening and assessment processes and protocols, the
33 department, in collaboration with the evaluators, and
34 participating counties shall integrate information
35 obtained from the pilot project and make it available to
36 the statewide chief probation officers organization.

37 SEC. 3. The sum of _____ dollars (\$_____) is
38 hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the State
39 Department of Mental Health for the purpose of
40 administering the Juvenile Probation Assessment Pilot



1 *Project as set forth in this act. Of this sum, _____*
2 *percent may be retained by the department for*
3 *administration of the program and no more than _____*
4 *percent shall be available for contracting with an*
5 *independent evaluator to assess data obtained from the*
6 *pilot counties and the overall success of the program.*

