

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 16, 2000

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 4, 2000

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1999–2000 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2228

Introduced by Assembly Member Aroner
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bock, Dutra, and Strom-Martin)

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: ²/₃. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: 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 (1) The prevalence of mental disorders among young
 15 people in juvenile justice facilities ranges from 50~~percent~~
 16 to 75 percent.
 17 (2) From one-quarter to one-third of the young people
 18 suffered from anxiety or mood disorders, nearly one-third
 19 of the girls suffered from posttraumatic stress syndrome,
 20 and up to 19 percent of the young people may be suicidal.
 21 (3) Young people with learning disabilities or serious
 22 emotional problems are arrested at higher rates than
 23 other young people who do not suffer from those
 24 disabilities.



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

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

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

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

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

32 ~~The local plan shall provide for the development and~~

33 (c) *The local plan shall provide for all of the following:*

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



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

4 ~~The local plan shall contain provisions for screening~~

5 (2) *The screening of* minors within timeframes
6 identified by the department, and ~~shall make provisions~~
7 ~~for referring the referral of~~ minors for a more extensive
8 assessment, including evaluation by the county probation
9 assessment team.

10 ~~The local plan shall include provisions for a county~~

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

20 ~~The local plan shall include protocols for the referral of~~

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

28 ~~The local plan shall identify provisions for staff who~~

29 (5) *Staff to* administer the screening and assessment
30 instruments identified in this section, and ~~specify~~
31 *minimum requirements for* the prior education and
32 training of those staff *members*. The plan shall also
33 contain provisions for the ongoing training of staff
34 involved in the program, including guidelines established
35 by the department.

36 ~~(e)~~

37 (d) (1) The department, in consultation with the
38 pilot counties and other individuals or organizations with
39 expert knowledge regarding the assessment of juvenile
40 offenders, shall develop minimum screening and



1 assessment instruments and protocols to be used by pilot
2 counties. The department shall provide technical
3 assistance to the pilot counties, including training relative
4 to quality screening and assessment of minors.

5 ~~The~~

6 (2) *The* department shall establish minimum
7 standards, funding schedules, procedures for the
8 collection of data, and *procedures for* the review and
9 approval of a local plan developed pursuant to subdivision

10 ~~(b)~~ (c).

11 ~~County~~

12 (e) *County* probation departments involved in this
13 pilot project are authorized to release information to the
14 department regarding minors involved in the program
15 for purposes of oversight and evaluation.

16 ~~(d)~~

17 (f) County probation departments involved in this
18 pilot project shall use data collected through the
19 screening and assessment process to identify service
20 needs of juveniles in the county, and work in
21 collaboration with the assessment team to develop a plan
22 for developing an appropriate continuum of treatment
23 services. They shall also identify existing local, state,
24 federal, and private resources that may be used to fund
25 these services.

26 ~~(e)~~

27 (g) The funding schedule developed by the
28 department shall include a set rate allocated to counties
29 for screening and for assessing minors identified in this
30 section, and an allocation for staff training *and*
31 administration.

32 ~~(f)~~

33 (h) The pilot project shall be evaluated independently
34 to judge the effectiveness of the screening and assessment
35 protocol and processes used to implement the programs,
36 including whether the assessments and screenings
37 provide adequate background data on the minor and the
38 minor's family unit, improve achievement of case plan
39 goals, are judged useful to counties and services
40 providers, and can be applied with ease.



1 ~~(g)~~
 2 (i) Upon satisfactory completion of the pilot project
 3 described in this section and development of formal
 4 screening and assessment processes and protocols, the
 5 department, in collaboration with the evaluators, and
 6 participating counties shall integrate information
 7 obtained from the pilot project and make it available to
 8 the statewide chief probation officers organization.

9 SEC. 3. The sum of _____ dollars (\$_____) is
 10 hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the State
 11 Department of Mental Health for the purpose of
 12 administering the Juvenile Probation Assessment Pilot
 13 Project as set forth in this act. Of this sum, _____
 14 percent may be retained by the department for
 15 administration of the program and no more than _____
 16 percent shall be available for contracting with an
 17 independent evaluator to assess data obtained from the
 18 pilot counties and the overall success of the program.

