

Executive Summary: Health Impact Review of SB 5571

Increasing Public Awareness of Mental Illness and Its Consequences

Evidence indicates that SB 5571 has potential to increase knowledge of mental health issues, decrease mental health stigma, and lead to positive behavior changes such as increased help-seeking, all of which have potential to improve health outcomes. The campaign target populations specified in the bill disproportionately experience negative mental health outcomes, stigma, and barriers to care; therefore improving health outcomes for these populations would likely decrease health disparities.

BILL INFORMATION

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Litzow, Keiser, Dammeier, Rolfes, Rivers, Mullet, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Shin, Ranker, Kline, Murray

Summary of Bill:

- The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must develop and conduct a public awareness and education campaign regarding mental health issues among adults and children.
- The campaign must include information about a number of aspects of mental health including stigma, prevalence of disorders, treatment efficacy, and benefits of early identification.
- The campaign must be proportional across the state and targeted to reach persons from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds and geographically isolated areas; who have low literacy or limited ability in the English language; or who are from special populations.

HEALTH IMPACT REVIEW

Summary of Findings:

We have assumed, based on bill language and correspondence with DSHS, that when developing this campaign DSHS will tailor the campaign messaging appropriately to the target populations.

This health impact review found the following evidence regarding the provisions in SB 5571:

- Minimal evidence that a mental health campaign would decrease stigma associated with mental health issues and treatment.*
- Minimal evidence that a mental health campaign would lead to positive behavior changes such as increased help-seeking and help-offering.*
- Some evidence that a campaign would increase public knowledge of mental health issues.*
- Strong evidence that increased awareness and knowledge of mental health would decrease stigma associated with mental health issues and treatment.
- Strong evidence that decreasing mental health stigma would improve health outcomes.
- Strong evidence that decreased mental health stigma would lead to positive behavior changes.
- Very strong evidence that these positive behavior changes would improve health outcomes.
- Very strong evidence that the target populations for the campaign as outlined in the bill disproportionately experience negative mental health outcomes, stigma, and barriers to care—so improving health outcomes for these populations would likely decrease health disparities.

FULL REVIEW

For review methods, logic model, strength-of-evidence analyses, and citations of empirical evidence refer to the full health impact review: <http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2014-05-SB5571.pdf>

* Note that while there is only 'some' or 'minimal' recent evidence for the efficacy of mental health awareness and education campaigns, this is largely because mental health campaigns have not been well researched. There is a much larger body of literature exploring the efficacy of health promotion campaigns, including campaigns targeting other highly stigmatized health issues. The efficacy of these campaigns was not explored as it fell outside of the scope of this review.