

SB 5853: 23-Hour Behavioral Health Crisis Relief Centers for Youth

What does SB 5853 do?

- Extends the crisis relief center model to provide behavioral health crisis response services for minors.
- Children must be served in separate treatment areas from adults.

Why is SB 5853 important?

- Our youth are in a behavioral health crisis. In Washington state, an average of 2.6 youth between the ages of 10 to 24 die by suicide each week.
- According to a report from the Children's Alliance, half of adolescents in Washington experience anxiety and depression
- It's only getting worse. DCYF reported that between 2013 and 2021, the rates of suicide and suicide attempts for youth have increased by 600%
- Currently, when a child is in a behavioral health crisis, they are often taken to emergency rooms where the environment can be noisy and chaotic and the facilities underequipped to deal with mental health crisis.
- Last year, our state passed a bill that set the stage for 23 hour crisis relief facilities for adults but now it's time to give our youth a place to go when they are in crisis.
- The crisis relief center model would be designed specifically to serve youth, with an environment where young people can feel safe and comfortable. Here they can get stabilized and set up with outpatient care and other mental health resources including access to a prescriber.
- We are still discovering the negative effects of the pandemic on children's mental health and our youth behavioral health crisis is only continuing to get worst.

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