

Date: 1-20-21

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Bill: SB 47, Mental Health Crisis Intervention Council

Sponsor: Daniel W. Thatcher

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill: creates the Mental Health Crisis Intervention Council to establish protocols and standards for the training and functioning of local mental health crisis intervention teams.

Discussion: Sen. Thatcher stated that police officers go through crisis intervention training. There is no statewide standards. There are different levels of success based on which program is taught. Instead of trying to codify the best practices, the Bill creates a council under the Division of Mental Health where the stakeholders can meet to create standards. The sponsor is unaware of any opposition. The council will not have the authority to make unilateral decisions. They will make recommendations to the Legislature, who will have final say on all decisions.

Yeas: 8

Nays: 0

N/V: 0

Outcome: Passed to the House with favorable recommendation, with a request for a fiscal note.

Bill: SB 53, Behavioral Emergency Services Amendments

Sponsor: Daniel W. Thatcher

Floor Sponsor: Jefferson S. Burton

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill: enacts requirements and provisions relating to behavioral emergency services technicians.

Discussion: Sen. Thatcher will get a fiscal note put on the bill. This Bill will create the first of its kind program where the Department of Emergency Medical Services will oversee the certification of a behavioral emergency services technician. This way, when someone calls 911 with a behavioral or mental health crisis, instead of sending police, fire or ambulance, a behavioral health specialist will answer the call for help. It is not uncommon for EMS to have to wait for police to secure the area before they can safely go in to provide medical attention. This would continue to occur if a behavioral emergency services technician determined police assistance was necessary. The Bill does not mandate any agency or political subdivision to hire this position. The Bill simply allows these groups the option to have a behavioral emergency services technician. Sen. Escamilla asked if the certification will go through the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL). The sponsor said no, they would go through the department of emergency medical services because they are not therapists. They will be trained on how to respond and determine where the patient needs to be treated. This unit is designed to be the immediate response team. The sponsor emphasized the use of a tiered response system. Senator Kennedy asked why this not currently in the EMS curriculum. The sponsor said EMT's already have so much to learn and continuing education. If this curriculum were added to the current training, it would double the amount of time it would take to train EMTs. The sponsor believes the first people to sign up for this training will be current EMTs. Senator Kennedy asked will there be legal consequences of a department for not having a behavioral health specialist. Guy Dansie, EMS Programs Director, said that there are different levels of EMS providers across the state. For instance, in highly populated areas, EMS providers employ paramedics and in rural areas basic EMTs is the standard. These different standards have not created a legal issue. Therefore, he does not believe it will create liability to have the option of a behavioral health technician.

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

N/V: 2

Outcome: Passed to the House with favorable recommendation.