



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

September 16, 2014

Motion 14225

Proposed No. 2014-0383.1

Sponsors Lambert

1 A MOTION requesting that the executive utilize an
2 existing task force convened to develop sustainable
3 solutions to the psychiatric boarding crisis, to review and
4 recommend short- and long-term sustainable solutions for
5 prevention, early intervention and least-restrictive
6 alternatives for individuals in mental health and substance
7 abuse crisis.

8 WHEREAS, the personal and public tolls related to individuals experiencing
9 mental health and substance abuse crises are growing each year, and

10 WHEREAS, the boarding of psychiatric patients in hospital emergency rooms and
11 acute care centers because space is not available at certified psychiatric treatment
12 facilities is a major problem in King County, with over sixty-four percent of involuntarily
13 detained individuals held on single bed certifications in 2012, and

14 WHEREAS, Washington state has broadened the criteria for involuntary
15 commitment of people with mental illness, while simultaneously closing hospital wards,
16 cutting state funding for mental health treatment and failing to fund bed space for
17 inpatient psychiatric treatment, and

18 WHEREAS, since 2007 the caseload for King County's involuntary treatment
19 court has grown faster than any other category of superior court cases, increasing by
20 fifty-four percent according to 2013 data, and

21 WHEREAS, Washington state ranks near the bottom of the country for
22 psychiatric treatment beds per capita, ranking forty-seventh of all states, and

23 WHEREAS, on August 7, 2014, the Washington state Supreme Court ruled that
24 hospital boarding of individuals in mental health crisis, absent medical need, is unlawful,
25 and

26 WHEREAS, through policy, programs and services, including the programs and
27 services funded in part by the mental illness dependency sales tax, King County is taking
28 action to increase mental health and substance abuse treatment capacity to prevent mental
29 health and substance abuse crises from occurring and to provide treatment in the
30 appropriate setting, and

31 WHEREAS, without a reduction of demand for, and adequate funding of, mental
32 health and substance abuse crisis services, the mental health and substance abuse systems
33 of King County and the Washington state face both human and fiscal crises, and

34 WHEREAS, the King County executive and the Governor of Washington state
35 have jointly convened a task force to work with hospitals and mental health and
36 substance abuse treatment providers and other community stakeholders to develop and
37 bring to state lawmakers short- and long-term sustainable solutions to address psychiatric
38 boarding;

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

40 A. The executive is requested assist the task force to find short- and long-term
41 sustainable solutions that: increase the use of least restrictive alternatives for individuals
42 in crisis, thereby reducing the demand for involuntary treatment, including the demand
43 for involuntary treatment court services; provide for successful reentry into the
44 community for individuals who have received services from psychiatric hospitals,
45 including mental health and substance abuse treatment; and focus especially on the
46 continuum of prevention and intervention services.

47 B. The task force is requested to submit a final report to the executive and the
48 council on June 30, 2016, detailing findings and recommendations on the following
49 matters:

50 1. Identification of services, programs, and protocols necessary for King County
51 to reduce of demand for involuntary treatment services, including involuntary treatment
52 court services

53 2. Identification of the continuum of reentry services from psychiatric hospitals
54 into the community, including mental health and substance abuse treatment services; and

55 3. Identification of prevention and intervention services and least restrictive
56 alternatives for individuals in crisis.

57 C. The task force is requested to provide progress reports to the executive and the
58 council describing the progress and findings of the task force as it develops and reviews
59 recommendations for the final report. The progress reports are due June 30, 2015, and
60 January 30, 2016. The reports to the council must be filed in the form of a paper original
61 and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and
62

63 provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers.

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Motion 14225 was introduced on 9/8/2014 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 9/15/2014, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 – Mr. Phillips, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Hague, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn,
Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski, and Mr. Upthegrove

No: 0

Excused: 1 – Mr. von Reichbauer

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: None