

Sales Tax provides local funding for mental health and chemical dependency services

Introduction

E2SSB-5763 was passed into law in 2005 to address increasing numbers homeless mentally ill people, high psychiatric inpatient hospitalization rates and limited local treatment options resulting in inappropriate use of jails and emergency rooms. It allows counties to exercise a one-tenth of one percent sales tax to support mental health and chemical dependency services.

Findings

A telephone survey of local officials and administrators in each county was conducted in late 2007 to assess the extent of implementation of this bill. At that time, eight counties had passed the sales tax option and five additional counties were considering implementing the tax. In seven counties, the County Board of Commissioners or County Council passed the measure directly without public vote and after public hearings.

The following table shows projected revenues for each of the eight counties. Planned services included alternative courts and an array of mental health and substance abuse treatment options.

Projected First-Year Annual Revenue

Successful Counties	Estimated First Year Tax Revenue
Clallam	\$1,000,000
Clark	6,400,000
Island	877,000
Jefferson	240,265
King	48,000,000
Okanogan	560,000
Skagit	2,500,000
Spokane	7,500,000
Total First Year Revenue Estimate	\$67,077,265

Conclusions and Recommendations

Statewide, the implications of this legislation vary due to the size of population in need and revenue potential based on local sales tax estimates. Conservative political values play a major role in lack of implementation of this tax. The twenty-six counties, not actively working on the tax provision, tend to be smaller and mostly in Eastern Washington where service populations are low, tax revenues are limited and conservative values discourage tax increases of any kind. Unless the cost benefits are evident and local support is great, local commissioners will not risk their political career to support a new tax, especially without going to the voters. Other community needs have higher priority. Other solutions may need to be explored to fund rural and frontier counties.

Estimated First Year Sales Tax Revenues and Preliminary Expenditure Plans

Clallam County - \$1.0 million

- Family Therapeutic Court
- Behavioral Health Team for Juveniles in the Court System
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners for Co-occurring Disordered (COD)
- Intensive Co-occurring Disorders Outpatient Adult Program
- Two mental health service projects for adults
- One chemical dependency service project for adults
- One co-occurring service project for youth
- One mental health service project for tribal adults and youth
- One co-occurring service project for adults and youth

Clark County - \$6.4 million

- Expand inpatient treatment for methamphetamine addicts
- Expand outpatient co-occurring disorders treatment
- Expand Detoxification Facility
- Create new family dependency & juvenile recovery court and treatment resources
- Expand existing felony drug court, mental health and substance abuse court and treatment
- Expand in jail mental health and chemical dependency services.

Island County - \$877,000

- Expand of adult and juvenile drug courts
- Develop Therapeutic Court for Dependency Proceedings
- Expand of Mental Health Professionals in school districts
- Senior and Vulnerable Adult Outreach Program
- Expansion of mental health services in jail and juvenile detention centers
- Resources for outpatient mental health
- Early Childhood Mental Health
- Professional resources for Community Education classes
- Evaluation, infrastructure and administration.

Jefferson County - \$397,685

- Fund CODIT (Co-Occurring Disorder Integrated treatment program)
- Substance Abuse Treatment Services
- Therapeutic Court
- Mental Health Services in the Domestic Violence Program
- Medication Management, treatment in the jail
- Program evaluation and community assessments
- Cash reserve for program shortfalls

King County - \$48 million

- Community Based Care
- Prevention programs for youth
- Jail and hospital diversion

Okanogan County - \$560,000

- Support therapeutic treatment court, including: mental health, juvenile drug and family dependency court
- Salaries for judge, prosecuting attorney, public defenders and sheriff for home visits
- Place probation officer in the school
- Juvenile drug court
- Mental health professional for outpatient treatment
- Special needs housing

Skagit County - \$2,500,000

- Enhance Adult Drug Court
- Family Dependency Therapeutic Court
- Mental Health Court
- Juvenile Drug Court
- Community Wellness Program:
- In-school mental health therapy for individuals, groups and families, in all K-8 schools
- Mental Health Peer Drop-in Center
- Establish Mental Health Respite/Social Detox Crisis Center, with an assertive case management component
- Chemical Dependency education and intervention in Juvenile Detention
- Expand community outpatient chemical dependency treatment
- In-school Substance Abuse Specialist at the Emerson Alternative High School
- Case management for mental health and chemical dependency in the Oasis Youth Shelter
- Training

Spokane County - \$7.5 million

- Mental Health Services for Children on Medicaid
- System Redesign
- Mental Health and Therapeutic Drug Courts
- Homeless outreach
- Programs to reduce psychiatric inpatient hospitalizations
- Outpatient Services
- Elder services
- School Services
- Medical/Medication Services
- Residential Beds

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