

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: 04/09/2012
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: AB 2399
AUTHOR: Allen, Michael

BILL SUMMARY: Mental health: state hospitals: injury and illness prevention plan.

This bill would require the state hospitals, operated by the Department of Mental Health (DMH), to establish injury and illness prevention committees responsible for recommending updates to hospital directors for the injury and illness prevention plans which would be required to be updated annually. This bill would require the plans to include specified information and submitted to the Legislature biennially.

The bill also would require each state hospital to develop an incident reporting system to report patient assaults on employees and report identified risks of patient assaults on employees, and would require this information to be readily accessible to staff and the injury and illness prevention committees.

FISCAL SUMMARY

This bill could result in minor and absorbable costs to the DMH to prepare and submit updated injury and illness prevention plans every two years. However, more significant costs may be incurred for each hospital to develop an incident reporting system in addition to the safety and security improvements already in progress.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance is opposed to this bill as it is unnecessary and could result in increased costs to the state by requiring the development of an additional incident reporting system by the DMH while measures are currently being implemented to improve the safety and security of employees. Additionally, this bill would add a new reporting requirement for the DMH to provide the Legislature with injury and illness prevention plans biennially but does not indicate the intended use or need for these plans. These reporting requirements are inconsistent with the ongoing effort to eliminate administrative inefficiencies and reduce costs, as proposed in Executive Order B-14-11, which required state agencies to review all legislatively required reports and propose eliminating reports no longer useful.

Current law requires employers to maintain a written, effective injury and illness prevention program. As such, the DMH actively monitors and updates safety and security policies and procedures to mitigate impacts from an increasing forensic population. Improved security measures are being implemented to increase safety for patients and staff and continue to be periodically examined.

The DMH is transitioning to the Department of State Hospitals with a focus on improving patient treatment, fiscal oversight, and the safety and security of patients and staff. This bill attempts to address concerns for the safety and security of staff at the hospitals. However, significant improvements are underway. Finance notes the recent increase in grounds presence and safety teams, comprised of hospital police officers and psychiatric technicians, to address and deter patient aggression. Additionally, new personal duress alarms are scheduled for full implementation in June 2012, at Napa State Hospital, and are proposed to be implemented during 2012-13 at Patton and Metropolitan State Hospitals. Upon full implementation at these facilities, alarms at the remaining two hospitals will be upgraded. The new alarms will improve response

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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____ Position Disapproved _____
BILL ANALYSIS			Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)

BILL ANALYSIS--(CONTINUED)**Form DF-43****AUTHOR****AMENDMENT DATE****BILL NUMBER**

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AB 2399

COMMENTS (continued)

times by immediately notifying staff, within a specified radius, of an incident, its location, and the staff requiring assistance.

Given these safety improvements, and the department's existing authority to form workgroups or committees as necessary, this bill is unnecessary.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)					Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)					
	CO	PROP					
	RV	98	FC	2011-2012 FC	2012-2013 FC	2013-2014	
4440/State Hosp	SO	No		-----	See Fiscal Summary	-----	0001