



STATE OF WASHINGTON

SEX OFFENDER POLICY BOARD

P.O. Box 43124 • Olympia, Washington 98504-3124 • www.sgc.wa.gov

SEX OFFENDER POLICY BOARD SB 5163 Workgroup Kickoff Meeting

August 12, 2021 2:30 – 4:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Jedd Pelander, DCYF; Brandon Williams, DOH SOTP Program; Jonathan Sherry, SCC; Dr. Zainab Ghazal, SCC; Dr. Elena Lopez, BHA HQ; Priscilla Hannon, Treatment Provider; Sonja Hardenbrook, Snohomish County PDA; Joshua Choate, Attorney General’s Office; Alex Mayo, WA Voices; Megan Schoor, OFM; Thea Mounts, OFM

Meeting Notes

Welcome & Call to Order

- **Megan** welcomed everyone to the meeting. Meeting participants were asked mute their microphones when not speaking and asked to use the chat function and “Raise your hand” function through Zoom whenever they would like. Members were reminded that the meeting was being recorded and the recording is available upon request.
- **Megan** invited people to introduce themselves.

Objective 1 - Review Meeting Objectives

- **Joshua** summarized the objectives for the meeting, including the need to discuss what should be included in the final report as far as topics covered.

MOTION #21-5-1: MOTION TO APPROVE THE July 29, 2021 MEETING MINUTES.

MOVED: Sonja Hardenbrook

SECONDED: Joshua Choate

ABSTAINED: Jedd Pelander

PASSED: Unanimously

Objective 2 – Current SOTP Caseload in Washington

- Review and discuss key takeaways from two handouts prepared by **Megan, Thea,** and **Jonathan.**

- What are the caseload statistics for SOTPs in Washington who serve juvenile sex offenders?
- What is the current breakdown of SOTPs by certification/license type? What client groups and counties are served by SOTPs?
- What results from the Treatment Subcommittee's SOTP Survey resonate with you, given this workgroup's assignment?
 - 17 of the 30 survey responders do not have a state Sexually Aggressive Youth (SAY) program contract.
 - **Jedd** explained that **SAY** is an outpatient treatment program for youth that are dependent on WA state and have exhibited sexual behavior or crime before the age of culpability. Youth meet with community treatment providers through this program.
 - **Joshua** asked the group about the adoption and acceptance of virtual services instead of in-person services. Is it working? Have there been any concerns with the idea of providing virtual services to LRA clients?
 - **Priscilla** shared that while there are certainly Pros and Cons, it is widely being accepted. There has been some flexibility due to the pandemic with providing virtual sessions. Some SOTPs have transitioned to providing virtual services entirely to clients. Video sessions, including for groups of adolescents, can be effective. Doing in-person sessions and individual evaluations with masks could be challenging because it may complicate the SOTP's ability to assess body language.
 - **Jedd** also mentioned that virtual services have helped reduce gaps in services for youth who are moving out of state, because they are able to connect with their SOTP virtually before their transition.
 - **Priscilla** also pointed out that virtual services can be problematic depending on where you're licensed. SOTPs typically are only allowed to provide services in the same state as their client.
 - **Sonja mentioned** that the SOTP Committee is getting ready to make a recommendation regarding suspending the face-to-face requirement.
 - **Brandon shared** that the suspension has been extended multiple times through DOH via emergency rulemaking process. The understanding early on was that the suspension would not be permanent. However, there are discussions happening about making it so that providers can have that option.
 - **Joshua clarified**, would the rule change involve making the virtual format a permanent option?

Notes

NEW SECTION. Sec. 13. A new section is added to chapter 71.09 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department, the sex offender policy board, and department of health shall convene a work group to develop recommendations to increase the availability and quality of sex offender treatment providers to meet the growing number of persons qualifying for conditional release to a less restrictive alternative. The work group shall gather data on...

1. best practices in other states and make recommendations whether sex offender treatment providers should be required to contract with the department;
2. whether annual or biannual trainings by the department should be mandatory for prospective and existing sex offender treatment providers;
3. whether the department should provide competitive wages for services or pay that is commensurate with the years of experience or education level of the treatment provider; and
4. whether the department should provide other incentives such as a cost-of-living pay increase or compensating providers for the cost of mandated trainings associated with the sex offender treatment provider license under chapter 18.155 RCW.

A report shall be submitted to the legislature by December 1, 2021.