A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING THE THERAPEUTIC GROUP TREATMENT PILOT PROGRAM

IN THE DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

In 2019, the general assembly authorized the division of youth services to expand a pilot program to implement therapeutic group treatment by adding an additional pilot program. Rather than expanding to 2 separate programs, the bill extends the term of the existing program and requires a final evaluation of the pilot program.
Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:


19-2-203. Division of youth services - created - interagency agreements - duties of administrators of facilities in connection with voter registration and casting of ballots - reports - pilot programs - fund - definitions - repeal. (4) Pilot program - competitive bid process - fund created - repeal. (b) The division shall implement two pilot programs to aid in the establishment of a division-wide therapeutic and rehabilitative culture. The pilot programs will test the efficacy of a therapeutic group-treatment approach and the ability of the division to keep youths and staff safe without the use of seclusion and mechanical restraints other than handcuffs. In administering the pilot programs, the division shall:

(I) Provide treatment to at least thirty-five youths committed to the division's care, divided into groups of no more than fifteen. In selecting youths to participate in the pilot programs, the division shall ensure that the youths selected reflect a representative cross section of youths committed to the division's care with respect to age and history of violence.

(III) Create teams of youths and staff by assigning each staff member to a group of youths, to which group the staff member remains assigned throughout the pilot programs;
(IV) Require staff assigned to the pilot programs PROGRAM to be trained as youth specialists and have or acquire substantial knowledge of rehabilitative treatment, de-escalation, adolescent behavior modification, trauma, safety, and physical management techniques that do not harm youths; YOUTH. THE DIVISION SHALL NOT assign no staff members to the pilot programs PROGRAM solely as security staff and SHALL maintain a ratio of staff to youths YOUTH that meets or exceeds nationally recognized standards and reflects best practices;

(V) Operate healthy, trauma-responsive organizational environments as demonstrated through prosocial, safe, and non-violent interaction by:

(G) To the extent possible, ensuring that each youth in the pilot programs PROGRAM remains with his or her THE YOUTH’S group and dedicated staff member during waking hours, except for specialized treatment or educational services;

(K) Phasing out completely within the first year of each THE pilot program the practice of placing youths A YOUTH alone in a room or area behind a locked door from which egress is prevented, except during sleeping hours, and avoiding isolation of youths from their A YOUTH FROM THE YOUTH’S peers;

(M) Providing continuity of services and relationships through a seamless case management system and assignment of a dedicated case manager to each youth which case manager WHO serves as the primary advocate for the youth and his or her THE YOUTH’S family and works actively with both throughout the pilot programs PROGRAM;

(VI) Contract through a competitive bid process with an independent third party to facilitate, coach, and train staff and leadership
throughout the course of the pilot programs PROGRAM. The independent third party must have expertise in systemic cultural transformation of a youth correctional system from a punitive correctional culture to a rehabilitative and therapeutic culture. The independent third party must have experience training staff in providing relationship-based, group-centered, trauma-responsive care and decreasing violence against youths YOUTH and staff in facilities. The independent third party shall assist with implementation of the pilot programs PROGRAM, provide training for staff working in the pilot programs PROGRAM, and provide at least one three-quarter-time to full-time consultant to provide on-the-ground mentorship, coaching, and training to pilot program staff members throughout the pilot programs PROGRAM. The consultant shall also provide training to the division's leadership regarding the philosophies and techniques used in the pilot programs PROGRAM. On or before January 1, 2018, and continuing through June 30, 2021, the division shall begin working actively with the contracted independent third party to take the necessary steps to commence the first pilot program as soon as possible, which must begin to serve youths SERVING YOUTH no later than July 1, 2018. As soon as possible, but no later than January 30, 2020, the division shall begin working with the second contracted independent third party to commence the second pilot program, which must begin to serve youths no later than July 1, 2020.

(VII) (A) Contract through a competitive bid process with an independent contractor other than one of the independent third parties described in subsection (4)(b)(VI) of this section to evaluate the effectiveness and outcome of the pilot programs PROGRAM. Prior to the start of each THE pilot program, the division and the contractor shall work
together to identify the data points to be collected throughout the pilot programs, which must include, but are not limited to, data concerning fights, assaults on youths, assaults on staff, critical incidents, restraints, mechanical restraints, seclusion, injuries to youths, injuries to staff, criminal charges filed against youths or staff, grievances or complaints regarding abuse that have been filed or sustained, staff absences, staff turnover, and youth educational achievement. The division shall collect the data and make it available to the contractor at the contractor's request throughout the pilot programs. For the purposes of this subsection (4)(b)(VII), on or before September 1, 2017, the division shall request proposals from candidates for an evaluation of the first pilot program. The division shall require each candidate to submit its proposal to the division on or before November 1, 2017, and the division shall contract with a candidate on or before December 1, 2017. Not later than October 1, 2019, the independent contractor described in this subsection (4)(b)(VII) shall assess on or before October 1, 2019, the independent contractor shall complete an initial report, and on or before October 1, 2021, the independent contractor shall complete a final report that assesses the data provided by the division. And complete a report evaluating the independent contractor shall prepare an initial and a final report that evaluates the effectiveness and outcomes of the first pilot program when compared to one or more comparable populations of youths in the division. For the purposes of this subsection (4)(b)(VII), the division shall contract for an evaluation of the effectiveness and outcomes of the first and second pilot programs when compared to one or more comparable populations of youths in the
division to be completed no later than October 1, 2021. The independent contractor shall submit such reports to the judiciary committees of the house of representatives and the senate, to the public health care and human services committee of the house of representatives, and to the health and human services committee of the senate, or to any successor committees. The division shall provide the contractors all available data requested to complete the reports.

(B) The independent contractors shall base their evaluations of the effectiveness of the pilot programs upon whether they reduce it reduces the number of fights, critical incidents, assaults on youths, assaults on staff, injuries to youths, and injuries to staff when compared to comparable populations of youths in the division, and whether they reduce it reduces the number of physical managements and mechanical restraints when compared to comparable populations of youths in the division.

(C) Not later than October 1, 2019, the first independent contractor shall complete the report described in subsection (4)(b)(VII)(A) of this section and submit it to the judiciary committees of the house of representatives and the senate, to the public health care and human services committee of the house of representatives, and to the health and human services committee of the senate, or to any successor committees.

(D) Not later than October 1, 2021, the second independent contractor shall complete the report described in subsection (4)(b)(VII)(A) of this section and submit it to the judiciary committees of the house of representatives and the senate, to the public health care and
human services committee of the house of representatives, and to the
health and human services committee of the senate, or to any successor
committees.

(VIII) Perform the necessary construction and renovation to create
youth residences for the pilot programs that are home-like and
therapeutic, including home-like sleeping quarters and living and group
meeting areas.

SECTION 2. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds,
determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.