Washington State Children and Youth Multi-System Care Project

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Seattle Children's Hospital convened with other hospital leaders and government agency officials to devise a legislative fix for children who are in a mental health crisis and cannot access the needed services. The group included representatives from the agencies that oversee, health, social services, child welfare, and education as well as the mental health policy lead in the governor's office. They met for over six months before settling on many of the provisions outlined in what is now called House Bill (HB) 1580.

HB 1580 centralizes responsibility for these youth in the Governor's office. It creates a new position called a multi-system care coordinator, who will be charged with creating a rapid care team and pooling state agency resources to help discharge children who are hospitalized but need outpatient psychiatric services or residential placement rather than hospital-level care. The coordinator will also have access to funds reserved to help find care or placement for kids with complex needs who can't live at home.

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