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SB-877 California Victim Compensation Board: mental health services: reimbursement. (2021-2022)

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Date Published: 09/29/2022 02:00 PM

Senate Bill No. 877

CHAPTER 707

An act to amend Section 13957 of the Government Code, relating to crime victims, and making an appropriation therefor.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2022. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 877, Eggman. California Victim Compensation Board: mental health services: reimbursement.

Existing law establishes the California Victim Compensation Board within the Government Operations Agency and authorizes the board to grant certain compensation, paid from the Restitution Fund, a continuously appropriated fund, for pecuniary loss when the board determines it will best aid the person seeking compensation. Existing law authorizes reimbursement, subject to certain limits, for outpatient psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related expenses incurred by the victim, or derivative victim, as a direct result of the crime, subject to specific conditions. These provisions include reimbursement for expenses for psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related services, which may be reimbursed only if the services were provided by certain individuals, including an individual who is licensed in California to provide those services or who is properly supervised by a person who is licensed in California to provide those services, as prescribed.

This bill would expand the application of that provision authorizing reimbursement for psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related services by certain individuals to instead specify that those services may be reimbursed only if the services were provided by a person who is licensed in the state in which the victim lives to provide those services, or who is properly supervised by a person who is licensed in the state in which the victim lives to provide those services, as prescribed.

By expanding the category of individuals who are eligible for reimbursement for expenditures from a continuously appropriated fund, this bill would make an appropriation.

Vote: 2/3 Appropriation: yes Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 13957 of the Government Code is amended to read:

13957. (a) The board may grant for pecuniary loss, when the board determines it will best aid the person seeking compensation, as follows:

- (1) Subject to the limitations set forth in Section 13957.2, reimburse the amount of medical or medical-related expenses incurred by the victim for services that were provided by a licensed medical provider, including, but not limited to, eyeglasses,

hearing aids, dentures, or any prosthetic device taken, lost, or destroyed during the commission of the crime, or the use of which became necessary as a direct result of the crime.

(2) Subject to the limitations set forth in Section 13957.2, reimburse the amount of outpatient psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related expenses incurred by the victim or derivative victim, including peer counseling services provided by a rape crisis center as defined by Section 13837 of the Penal Code, and including family psychiatric, psychological, or mental health counseling for the successful treatment of the victim provided to family members of the victim in the presence of the victim, whether or not the family member relationship existed at the time of the crime, that became necessary as a direct result of the crime, subject to the following conditions:

(A) The following persons may be reimbursed for the expense of their outpatient mental health counseling in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000):

(i) A victim.

(ii) A derivative victim who is the surviving parent, grandparent, sibling, child, grandchild, spouse, or fiancé of a victim of a crime that directly resulted in the death of the victim.

(iii) A derivative victim, as described in paragraphs (1) to (4), inclusive, of subdivision (c) of Section 13955, who is the primary caretaker of a minor victim whose claim is not denied or reduced pursuant to Section 13956 in a total amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for not more than two derivative victims.

(B) The following persons may be reimbursed for the expense of their outpatient mental health counseling in an amount not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000):

(i) A derivative victim not eligible for reimbursement pursuant to subparagraph (A), provided that mental health counseling of a derivative victim described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (c) of Section 13955, shall be reimbursed only if that counseling is necessary for the treatment of the victim.

(ii) A minor who suffers emotional injury as a direct result of witnessing a violent crime and who is not eligible for reimbursement of the costs of outpatient mental health counseling under any other provision of this chapter. To be eligible for reimbursement under this clause, the minor must have been in close proximity to the victim when the minor witnessed the crime.

(C) The board may reimburse a victim or derivative victim for outpatient mental health counseling in excess of that authorized by subparagraph (A) or (B) or for inpatient psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling if the claim is based on dire or exceptional circumstances that require more extensive treatment, as approved by the board.

(D) Expenses for psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related services may be reimbursed only if the services were provided by either of the following individuals:

(i) A person who would have been authorized to provide those services pursuant to former Article 1 (commencing with Section 13959) as it read on January 1, 2002.

(ii) A person who is licensed in the state in which the victim lives to provide those services, or who is properly supervised by a person who is licensed in the state in which the victim lives to provide those services, subject to the board's approval and subject to the limitations and restrictions the board may impose.

(3) Subject to the limitations set forth in Section 13957.5, authorize compensation equal to the loss of income or loss of support, or both, that a victim or derivative victim incurs as a direct result of the victim's or derivative victim's injury or the victim's death. If the qualifying crime is a violation of Section 236.1 of the Penal Code, the board may authorize compensation equal to loss of income or support that a victim incurs as a direct result of the victim's deprivation of liberty during the crime, not to exceed the amount set forth in Section 13957.5. If the victim or derivative victim requests that the board give priority to reimbursement of loss of income or support, the board may not pay medical expenses, or mental health counseling expenses, except upon the request of the victim or derivative victim or after determining that payment of these expenses will not decrease the funds available for payment of loss of income or support.

(4) Authorize a cash payment to or on behalf of the victim for job retraining or similar employment-oriented services.

(5) Reimburse the expense of installing or increasing residential security, not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000). Installing or increasing residential security may include, but need not be limited to, both of the following:

(A) Home security device or system.

(B) Replacing or increasing the number of locks.

(6) Reimburse the expense of renovating or retrofitting a victim's residence, or the expense of modifying or purchasing a vehicle, to make the residence or the vehicle accessible or operational by a victim upon verification that the expense is medically necessary for a victim who is permanently disabled as a direct result of the crime, whether the disability is partial or total.

(7) (A) Authorize a cash payment or reimbursement not to exceed three thousand four hundred and eighteen dollars (\$3,418) to a victim for expenses incurred in relocating, if the expenses are determined by law enforcement to be necessary for the personal safety of the victim or by a mental health treatment provider to be necessary for the emotional well-being of the victim. For purposes of this paragraph, "expenses incurred in relocating" may include the costs of temporary housing for any pets belonging to the victim upon immediate relocation.

(B) The cash payment or reimbursement made under this paragraph shall only be awarded to one claimant per crime giving rise to the relocation. The board may authorize more than one relocation per crime if necessary for the personal safety or emotional well-being of the claimant. However, the total cash payment or reimbursement for all relocations due to the same crime shall not exceed three thousand four hundred and eighteen dollars (\$3,418). For purposes of this paragraph, a claimant is the crime victim, or, if the victim is deceased, a person who resided with the deceased at the time of the crime.

(C) The board may, under compelling circumstances, award a second cash payment or reimbursement to a victim for another crime if both of the following conditions are met:

(i) The crime occurs more than three years from the date of the crime giving rise to the initial relocation cash payment or reimbursement.

(ii) The crime does not involve the same offender.

(D) When a relocation payment or reimbursement is provided to a victim of sexual assault or domestic violence and the identity of the offender is known to the victim, the victim shall agree not to inform the offender of the location of the victim's new residence and not to allow the offender on the premises at any time, or shall agree to seek a restraining order against the offender. A victim may be required to repay the relocation payment or reimbursement to the board if the victim violates the terms set forth in this paragraph.

(E) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (A) and (B), the board may increase the cash payment or reimbursement for expenses incurred in relocating to an amount greater than three thousand four hundred and eighteen dollars (\$3,418) if the board finds this amount is appropriate due to the unusual, dire, or exceptional circumstances of a particular claim.

(F) If a security deposit, pet deposit, or both is required for relocation, the board shall be named as the recipient and receive the funds upon expiration of the victim's rental agreement.

(8) When a victim dies as a result of a crime, the board may reimburse any individual who voluntarily, and without anticipation of personal gain, pays or assumes the obligation to pay any of the following expenses:

(A) The medical expenses incurred as a direct result of the crime in an amount not to exceed the rates or limitations established by the board.

(B) The funeral and burial expenses incurred as a direct result of the crime, not to exceed twelve thousand eight hundred and eighteen dollars (\$12,818). The board shall not create or comply with a regulation or policy that mandates a lower maximum potential amount of an award pursuant to this subparagraph for less than twelve thousand eight hundred and eighteen dollars (\$12,818).

(9) When the crime occurs in a residence or inside a vehicle, the board may reimburse any individual who voluntarily, and without anticipation of personal gain, pays or assumes the obligation to pay the reasonable costs to clean the scene of the crime in an amount not to exceed one thousand seven hundred and nine dollars (\$1,709). Services reimbursed pursuant to this subdivision shall be performed by persons registered with the State Department of Public Health as trauma scene waste practitioners in accordance with Chapter 9.5 (commencing with Section 118321) of Part 14 of Division 104 of the Health and Safety Code.

(10) When the crime is a violation of Section 600.2 or 600.5 of the Penal Code, the board may reimburse the expense of veterinary services, replacement costs, or other reasonable expenses, as ordered by the court pursuant to Section 600.2 or 600.5 of the Penal Code, in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

(11) An award of compensation pursuant to paragraph (5) of subdivision (f) of Section 13955 shall be limited to compensation to provide mental health counseling and shall not limit the eligibility of a victim for an award that the victim may be otherwise entitled to receive under this part. A derivative victim shall not be eligible for compensation under this provision.

(b) The total award to or on behalf of each victim or derivative victim may not exceed thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000), except that this award may be increased to an amount not exceeding seventy thousand dollars (\$70,000) if federal funds for that increase are available.