

"If no other crime has been committed, if the person is simply drunk in public, he can not be apprehended," Kurle, planning director of the Office on Alcoholism, said.

alcoholism at approved treatment centers.

The Office on Alcoholism has

an increased need for treatment centers, or that insurance money covering treatment would now be available, Kurle said.

Well, the need hasn't eased any in the past year."

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## County to have treatment facility

King County is gearing up to respond to the change in law decriminalizing alcoholism. Both a new county treatment facility and the law will be in operation by the first of the year.

Chuck Kester, administrator of the Central Alcoholism Agency, said plans are well underway for establishment of a detoxification center with facilities at Group Health Hospital in Seattle.

"We are awaiting confirmation of the program from the

federal government," Kester said. "That approval could arrive any day."

The new alcohol treatment facility would provide a medical alternative to jail in the handling of alcoholics. Plans also are being made to provide a countywide transportation network using police, county health department personnel and volunteers to get alcoholics to the center anytime of the night or day.

The Central Alcoholism Agency is a division of the

Seattle-King County Department of Public Health.

"We will be dealing, initially, with alcoholism detoxification," Kester said. "But we are working to put together a whole series of progressive steps leading to a recovery program for the alcoholic."

"We view this facility as just the first step in treatment," Kester said. "We want to get down to providing treatment and education, not just an overnight alternative to jail."

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