
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6398

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES.

SUMMARY

This bill principally makes three unrelated changes to statutes concerning the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

Current law prohibits Whiting Forensic Hospital patients in the hospital's maximum-security service from being present during a search of their personal belongings. The bill limits this prohibition to only when police officers conduct the search and have probable cause that contraband or hazardous items are hidden in the patient's living area.

The bill also allows DMHAS to establish and use a single electronic health record (EHR) system for authorized personnel to access patient health records from any of DMHAS's divisions and facilities for purposes of diagnosing and treating patients and improving operations. Under the bill, all DMHAS divisions and facilities must provide their patient records to the EHR system. Any disclosure of the system's patient information made outside of DMHAS must be done in accordance with state and federal law.

Additionally, the bill increases, from nine to 11, the membership of the Whiting Forensic Hospital advisory board. It does this by adding two members with psychiatric disabilities, at least one of whom must have received inpatient psychiatric hospital services. The advisory board develops policies and sets standards related to the hospital's patients.

Lastly, the bill makes several technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021, except the provision establishing a single EHR system takes effect upon passage.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/12/2021)