

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 21-75—HB 6398

Public Health Committee

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

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

Prior law prohibited Whiting Forensic Hospital patients in the hospital's maximum-security service from being present during a search of their personal belongings. The act 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 act 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 act, 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 act 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 act makes several technical changes.

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