
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5223

AN ACT EXPANDING THE PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR REGULATED PROFESSIONS TO INCLUDE PHARMACISTS.

SUMMARY

This bill adds pharmacists to the list of providers eligible for the professional assistance program for health professionals (currently, the Health Assistance InterVention Education Network (HAVEN); see BACKGROUND). By law, the program is an alternative, voluntary, and confidential rehabilitation program that provides various services to health professionals with a chemical dependency, emotional or behavioral disorder, or physical or mental illness.

In doing so, the bill makes a number of conforming changes to reflect the fact that the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) regulates pharmacists; currently, the professionals eligible for the program are regulated by the Department of Public Health (DPH). These corresponding changes include specifying that if a pharmacist fails to comply with the program, HAVEN must notify DCP and transfer related records to the agency. (While the bill appears to also extend eligibility to pharmacy technicians and interns, most of the bill's provisions refer only to "pharmacists.")

Under the bill, DPH remains the lead agency responsible for the program (e.g., overseeing HAVEN's annual audit and oversight committee). The bill also requires HAVEN to submit its annual report and audit to the General Law Committee; it already submits them to the Public Health Committee.

The bill also specifies that if any of the 18 pharmacy-related licensing fees (e.g., issuance, renewal, and notice filing fees) are increased by at least \$5 in the future, then the consumer protection commissioner must (1) certify the amount of revenue received as a result of the fee increase

each January, April, July, and October and (2) transfer it to the professional assistance program account.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Health Professional Assistance Program

By law, before a health professional can enter the program, a medical review committee must (1) determine if he or she is an appropriate candidate for rehabilitation and participation and (2) set terms and conditions of participation. The program must include mandatory, periodic evaluations of each participant's ability to practice with skill and safety and without posing a threat to the health and safety of any person or patient (CGS § 19a-12a).

COMMITTEE ACTION

General Law Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/15/2022)