
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6729

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE MEMBERSHIP OF VARIOUS ADVISORY BOARDS AND COUNCILS.

SUMMARY

By law, “state-operated facilities” are hospitals and facilities the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) operates in whole or part that provide treatment for people with psychiatric disabilities, substance use disorders, or both (CGS § 17a-458) (see BACKGROUND).

This bill requires all state-operated facilities to have an advisory board that includes members with lived experience with behavioral health disorders. The bill eliminates the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC) Advisory Board and instead subjects the center to its advisory board requirements for all other state-operated facilities. The bill also requires the existing Connecticut Valley Hospital Advisory Council to include, on and after January 1, 2024, at least two members appointed by the DMHAS commissioner with lived experience with behavioral health disorders.

Under current law, the DMHAS commissioner appoints six members of the 13-member Connecticut Valley Hospital Advisory Council. Existing law, unchanged by the bill, requires the council to advise DMHAS on topics such as building use, security, and clients residing at the facility and their discharge.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the advisory board requirements for state-operated facilities are effective October 1, 2023.

ADVISORY BOARDS FOR STATE-OPERATED FACILITIES

Current law allows (1) state-operated facilities to have an advisory board and (2) the superintendents or directors of these facilities to, in accordance with certain statutory requirements, appoint the board and set terms for members. The bill instead requires (1) facilities to have these advisory boards and (2) superintendents or directors to appoint members that include people with lived experience with behavioral health disorders.

Under current law, CMHC is not allowed to have a superintendent- or director-appointed advisory board and instead has a nine-member CMHC Advisory Board that the DMHAS commissioner appoints (see BACKGROUND). The bill eliminates this CMHC Advisory Board and subjects the center to the advisory board requirements for state-operated facilities discussed above.

BACKGROUND

State-Operated Facilities and Advisory Boards

By law, state-operated facilities generally include, but are not limited to, the Capitol Region Mental Health Center, the Connecticut Valley Hospital (including its Addictions and General Psychiatric divisions), the Whiting Forensic Hospital, the Connecticut Mental Health Center, the Franklin S. DuBois Center, the Greater Bridgeport Community Mental Health Center, and River Valley Services (CGS § 17a-458).

An advisory board is required to (1) periodically meet with the facility superintendent or director to advise on the facility's programs and policies; (2) act as a liaison between the facility and residents of its assigned geographic area; and (3) issue reports to the governor and DMHAS commissioner on facility conditions and recommendations for changes or improvements (CGS § 17a-471).

Connecticut Mental Health Center Advisory Board

CMHC is a community mental health center that DMHAS operates in collaboration with the Yale Department of Psychiatry. Under current law, the CMHC Advisory Board is composed of nine members the DMHAS commissioner appoints. Of these appointments, two each must

be nominated by the Yale-New Haven Health System and Yale University. The advisory board is tasked with advising and assisting the health center's director and may recommend policies and practices.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 0 (03/20/2023)