

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6599

AN ACT CONCERNING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND OTHER

Title: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

Vote Date: 3/3/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/22/2023

File No.: 55

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Connecticut, like many states across the country, continues to see increases in maternal death and intimate partner violence (IPV). These occurrences negatively impact not only the mother and the child, but entire families and communities. The screening and early detection of these issues would serve to provide early intervention, appropriate referrals and improve outcomes.

This bill requires that, by January 1, 2024, The Department of Public Health's (DPH) Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC) develop educational materials on IPV for pregnant and post-partum women. DPH must distribute the material to the state's birthing hospitals, obstetricians and any provider practicing obstetrics to be given to patients.

Starting by January 1, 2024, the bill permits licensed health care providers who screen patients for domestic violence to annually submit documentation to DPH indicating that they perform domestic violence screening of patients. Starting January 1, 2025, DPH must maintain a list of the health care providers who submit this documentation and publish it on its website.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Asley Starr Frechette, MPH, Director of Health Professional Outreach, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV):

As the leading voice for victims of domestic violence representing 18 organizations that provide services to nearly 40,000 victims each year, CCADV supports this bill. The dissemination of this public educational information through DPH would promote the importance of IPV screening and would allow survivors to be able to access a list of providers where they can feel safe and heard. CCADV has a strong relationship with the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) and DPH to offer training and support to health and community providers across the state. Our advocacy teams are ready to work with the MMRC to ensure that free training and support are offered to any provider required to distribute the educational materials outlined in the bill.

Rebecca Ruitto, Chair of the CT Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CTAMFT):

CTAMFT represents over 2,000 MFTs throughout Connecticut and is in support of HB6599. Many MFT's specialize in couples' issues such as IPV, family issues regarding other forms of domestic violence, and perinatal treatment of expectant and new mothers. Our training specifically prepares MFTs to treat not only individuals, but also the relationships most impacted by these issues. While in support of this bill, CTAMFT requests the addition of legislative language in Sect. 1c to include any of the six licensed medical professionals- LMFT, LPC, SW, LADC, APRN, and PA- to be included in the membership of the MMRC as defined in last year's bill, HB 5001.

Jamie Rodriguez, LMFT and Chair if the CTAMFT:

Ms. Rodriguez's testimony mirrored the comments of Ms. Ruitto and again highlighted the specific and extensive training of MFTs in treating individuals, couples, families and systems as problems arise including perinatal and IPV treatment. She also requests the change in language to include Licensed Mental Health professionals as defined in last year's bill HB 5001.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Kathleen Panazza

Date: March 16, 2023