

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 23-121—sHB 6729
Public Health Committee

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

SUMMARY: This act requires, rather than allows, all of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' (DMHAS) "state-operated facilities" to have an advisory board that includes members with lived experience with behavioral health disorders. By law, "state-operated facilities" are hospitals and facilities that DMHAS operates in whole or part that provide treatment for people with psychiatric disabilities, substance use disorders, or both (see BACKGROUND).

Under existing law and the act, facilities must have their superintendent or director make advisory board member appointments. The act requires these appointing authorities to appoint at least two members with lived experience with behavioral health disorders to their respective boards.

The act eliminates the statutory advisory board to the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC), a community mental health center that DMHAS operates in collaboration with the Yale Department of Psychiatry. Under prior law, this nine-member CMHC Advisory Board was appointed by the DMHAS commissioner with nominations from the Yale-New Haven Health System and Yale University. The act instead subjects the center to the advisory board requirements for all other state-operated facilities.

The act also expands the existing Connecticut Valley Hospital Advisory Council from 13 to 15 members by giving the DMHAS commissioner two additional appointments. On and after January 1, 2024, it requires the council to have at least two DMHAS-appointed members with lived experience with behavioral health disorders. By law, the council advises DMHAS on topics such as building use, security, and clients residing at the facility and their discharge.

Lastly, the act makes technical and conforming changes.

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

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

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Bridgeport Community Mental Health Center, and River Valley Services (CGS § 17a-458).

A state-operated facility's advisory board must (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).