



Acts Affecting People With Disabilities

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and special acts) significantly affecting people with disabilities during the 2022 regular session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Seniors and Acts Affecting Health Professions, are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/actsaffecting.asp>.

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the act are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/olrsums.asp>.

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/>.

Table of Contents

Accessibility in Public Spaces	6
Capitol Complex Accessibility Study	6
Outdoor Dining and Retail Operations.....	6
Benefits and Tax Exemptions.....	6
ABLE Accounts	6
Deadline for Renters’ Rebate Program	6
Department of Children and Families (DCF) Policy for Disability Benefits.....	7
Expanded Property Tax Exemption for Charitable Housing.....	7
Firefighters Cancer Relief Program.....	7
Income Calculation for 100% Disabled Veterans’ Tax Exemption	8
Committees, Councils, and Working Groups.....	8
Autism Spectrum Disorder Council.....	8
Behavioral and Mental Health Policy and Oversight Committee	8
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Working Group.....	8
Rare Disease Council.....	9
Conservators, Guardians, Caregivers, and Family.....	9
Appeal of Involuntary Conservatorship or Guardianship.....	9
COVID-19 Vaccination Status Information	9
Homemaker-Companion Agencies and Power of Attorney	9
Increased Community Spouse Protected Amount.....	9
Driving and Licensure	10
License Restoration After Medical Withdrawal.....	10
Licensing Drivers Who Wear Glasses With Bioptic Lenses.....	10
Educational Settings.....	10
Ableism Task Force.....	10
Emotional Disability and Special Education.....	10
Mental Health Plans for Student Athletes.....	10
Office of Higher Education (OHE) Grants for Mental Health Services	11
Paraeducators at PPT Meetings.....	11
Recovery High Schools	11
School Resource Officer Impact Study on Students With Disabilities.....	11
SDE Grants for Mental Health Specialists and Services	11
Student Mental Health Specialist Employment Survey.....	12
Healthcare Access and Eligibility	12
Ban on Non-Compete Home Care Contracts.....	12
Community Ombudsman Program.....	12
Covered Connecticut.....	12

Medical Assistance and Immigration	13
Medical Marijuana	13
Medication Administration by Unlicensed Personnel	13
Probate Court Orders and Medicaid Eligibility	13
Technical Standards for Medical Diagnostic Equipment	14
Transplant Non-Discrimination Based on Disability	14
Long-Term Care Facilities, Hospitals, and Other Facilities.....	14
Certificate of Need (CON) for Mental Health Facilities.....	14
CON for Nursing Homes and Other Facilities.....	15
DPH Grant to Children’s Hospital.....	15
Infection Prevention and Control Specialists.....	15
Strike Contingency Plans.....	15
Whiting Forensic Hospital.....	16
Mental Health Outside of Educational Settings.....	16
DMHAS Advertising Campaign	16
DMHAS Mobile Crisis Response Services	16
Emergency Certificates for Psychiatric Evaluation	16
Mental and Behavioral Health Services at Prisons	16
Protocols for EMS Transport to DCF-Licensed Urgent Crisis Centers.....	17
Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy	17
Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations	17
Suicide Advisory Board	18
Suicide Prevention Hotline Fund.....	18
Provider Rates, Retention, and Recruitment	18
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Grant Program.....	18
Expedited Licensure for Certain Health Care Providers	18
Interstate Compacts	19
Licensure by Reciprocity for Speech and Language Pathologists or Occupational Therapists....	19
OHS Payment Parity Study	19
Physician Recruitment Working Group.....	19
Provider Rates.....	19
Waiver for Licensure Requirements for Certain Mental or Behavioral Health Providers.....	20
Service Animals.....	20
Dog Licenses for Service Animals and Therapy Animals.....	20
State Agencies and State Library.....	21
DDS-Related Statutes.....	21
State Agency Website Requirements	21
State Library Board Consultation.....	21
Substance Use Disorder	22

Auricular Acupuncture	22
DMHAS Opioid Use Disorder Pilot Program.....	22
Mobile Units for Dispensing Controlled Substances	22
Multicare Institutions.....	22
Prescription Opioid Patient Care Plans.....	23
Voting.....	23
Absentee Voting.....	23
Miscellaneous	23

Accessibility in Public Spaces

Capitol Complex Accessibility Study

A new law requires the legislature to hire, within available appropriations, a third-party to examine the accessibility of the State Capitol building, the Legislative Office Building, and related buildings and grounds. The hired entity must report to the Joint Committee on Legislative Management by January 1, 2023, including recommended modifications to make the capitol complex accessible, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ([SA 22-10](#), effective upon passage).

Outdoor Dining and Retail Operations

Recent changes to the state’s outdoor dining and retail laws require outdoor activities to be operated so that pedestrian pathways and means of access comply with the physical accessibility guidelines in the State Building Code. Existing law already required pathways to be constructed, and access to be provided, that comply with the ADA’s physical accessibility guidelines ([PA 22-1](#), effective upon passage, except the permanent outdoor dining accessory use authorization is effective May 1, 2023).

Benefits and Tax Exemptions

ABLE Accounts

A new law requires funds invested in, contributed to, or distributed from an “Achieving a Better Life Experience” (ABLE) account to be disregarded when determining someone’s eligibility for the (1) state-administered general assistance program or (2) State Supplement Program (SSP). For SSP, the disregard only applies to the extent the funds could be disregarded under the federal Supplemental Security Income program. Existing law already requires ABLE account funds to be disregarded when determining eligibility for certain other programs, including Temporary Family Assistance.

By law, the ABLE program provides tax advantaged savings accounts to help individuals and their families save private funds to pay for certain expenses related to disability or blindness ([PA 22-140](#), §§ 9-11, effective July 1, 2022).

Deadline for Renters’ Rebate Program

A new law changes a deadline for requesting more time to apply for a rebate under the Renters’ Rebate Program, which provides partial reimbursement of rent and utility bills paid by certain elderly and totally disabled renters. The new law requires renters with extenuating health

circumstances or other good cause to apply by November 15, rather than December 15, for an application deadline extension ([PA 22-74](#), § 4, effective July 1, 2022).

Department of Children and Families (DCF) Policy for Disability Benefits

New legislation prohibits DCF from using a child’s Social Security disability benefit payments to offset the cost of care while in DCF care and custody. The law also requires the DCF commissioner, by January 1, 2023, to establish a policy on managing and spending Social Security disability benefit payments received by, or on behalf of, children and youths in DCF care and custody. Among other things, the policy must require benefit payments to be deposited into a trust account and include guidelines on account management and oversight ([PA 22-81](#), § 16, effective July 1, 2022).

Expanded Property Tax Exemption for Charitable Housing

This session the legislature eliminated a restriction on the types of housing owned by federally tax-exempt, charitable organizations that are exempt from the property tax, making various types of housing for vulnerable populations exempt even if they are not temporary housing. Specifically, the act makes the following eligible for a property tax exemption: (1) orphanages; (2) drug or alcohol treatment or rehabilitation facilities; (3) housing for people who are homeless, have a mental health disorder or an intellectual or physical disability, or are domestic violence victims; and (4) housing for ex-offenders or participants in judicial branch- or Department of Corrections- sponsored programs ([PA 22-73](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2022, and applicable to assessment years commencing on or after that date).

Firefighters Cancer Relief Program

The legislature enacted a new law creating a funding source for the firefighters cancer relief account, which is used to provide wage replacement benefits to eligible paid and volunteer firefighters diagnosed with cancer. Beginning January 1, 2024, each town must contribute, by December 15 of each year, \$10 per paid or volunteer firefighter within the town’s fire district or districts. However, the act only requires towns to contribute funds for firefighters who meet certain criteria and work experience, such as at least five years as an interior structural firefighter or a fire marshal, fire investigator, or fire inspector.

Under existing law, a cancer relief subcommittee of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association awards wage replacement benefits under the state’s firefighters cancer relief program. The act provides that an award from the fund does not create a presumption that the firefighter’s cancer was work-related for purposes of workers’ compensation ([PA 22-139](#), effective January 1, 2024,

except provision that relief account awards do not create a workers' compensation presumption is upon passage).

Income Calculation for 100% Disabled Veterans' Tax Exemption

A new law generally expands eligibility for the 100% disabled veterans' property tax exemption. Beginning in FY 24, the law requires municipalities that opt to provide low-income, 100% disabled veterans with three times the base state-mandated property tax exemption to calculate income eligibility using only the veteran's federal adjusted gross income (AGI), excluding veterans' disability payments. Under prior law, any other income not included in the veteran's federal AGI, other than veterans' disability payments, had to be added to it for purposes of determining income eligibility ([PA 22-74](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2022, and applicable to assessment years beginning on or after that date).

Committees, Councils, and Working Groups

Autism Spectrum Disorder Council

A new law removes the Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner, or her designee, as an ex-officio co-chair of the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Advisory Council. It instead requires all three chairpersons to be elected by and from the council's members, but at least two chairs must be a (1) person with ASD, (2) parent or guardian of a child with ASD, or (3) parent or guardian of an adult with ASD ([PA 22-53](#), effective July 1, 2022).

Behavioral and Mental Health Policy and Oversight Committee

A new law establishes, within the Legislative Department, a Behavioral and Mental Health Policy and Oversight Committee. The committee must evaluate and report on various matters related to the mental health system for children and develop a related strategic plan. The committee's first report is due January 1, 2023; it must report the strategic plan by August 1, 2023 ([PA 22-47](#), § 70, effective upon passage).

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Working Group

A new law creates a working group to develop a plan to increase the number of psychiatry residency and child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship placements in the state. The group must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Health Committee by January 1, 2023 ([PA 22-47](#), § 68, effective July 1, 2022).

Rare Disease Council

Starting July 1, 2023, a new law establishes the Connecticut Rare Disease Advisory Council to advise and make recommendations to the Department of Public Health (DPH) and other state agencies on the needs of residents living with rare diseases and their caregivers. The council is within DPH for administrative purposes only ([PA 22-58](#), § 48, effective July 1, 2022).

Conservators, Guardians, Caregivers, and Family

Appeal of Involuntary Conservatorship or Guardianship

A new law generally extends, from 30 to 45 days, the time to appeal to Superior Court from a probate court panel's order, denial, or decree involving a writ of habeas corpus petition challenging an involuntary conservatorship or guardianship ([PA 22-112](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2022).

COVID-19 Vaccination Status Information

This session, the legislature extended an existing law on disclosing a person's COVID-19 vaccination information to also cover the person's court-appointed fiduciary (e.g., a conservator of the person). Under the act, if a person received a COVID-19 vaccination, DPH must give the person's fiduciary, upon request, information on the person's COVID-19 vaccination status from the person's vaccination provider. Otherwise, DPH must not disclose this information without consent ([PA 22-129](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2022).

Homemaker-Companion Agencies and Power of Attorney

A new law prohibits homemaker-companion agencies' owners, agents, corporate officers, and employees (other than a client's immediate family member) from serving as a client's agent under a power of attorney. The client may petition the consumer protection commissioner for an exemption, which may be granted for good cause shown ([PA 22-104](#), §§ 44-45 & 47, effective upon passage).

Increased Community Spouse Protected Amount

When a married Medicaid recipient is institutionalized, the couple's assets are used to pay for the cost of care. Federal law allows the spouse living in the community to keep some of the assets to ensure the spouse does not become impoverished. States set community spouse protected amounts within federal minimum and maximum limits. A new law increases the state's minimum community spouse protected amount from \$27,480 (the federal minimum in 2022) to \$50,000. Under the act, the spouse may keep the greater of \$50,000 or half the couple's combined assets, up to the federal maximum (\$137,400 in 2022) ([PA 22-118](#), § 235, effective July 1, 2022).

Driving and Licensure

License Restoration After Medical Withdrawal

Under existing law, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner may allow a person whose license was medically withdrawn to drive on a limited basis (i.e., with a licensed driving instructor or testing agent) if she (1) determines that the driver does not have a health problem affecting his or her ability to drive safely and (2) requires the driver to pass a road skills test for license reinstatement (CGS § 14-46e(b)). A new law requires the commissioner to make her determination after consulting with the Motor Vehicle Operator's License Medical Advisory Board, rather than through a hearing ([PA 22-44](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2022).

Licensing Drivers Who Wear Glasses With Bioptic Lenses

This session the legislature expanded driving access by requiring the DMV commissioner to issue driver's licenses to people wearing glasses with bioptic lenses (i.e., consisting of miniature telescopic lenses mounted on top of the eyeglasses) if the applicant otherwise meets regulatory vision standards and license requirements ([PA 22-44](#), § 11, effective October 1, 2022).

Educational Settings

Ableism Task Force

With new legislation, the General Assembly created a task force to combat ableism. The task force must identify (1) current efforts to educate all students on disability and combat ableism in classrooms and in the public school curriculum and (2) opportunities to expand these efforts and integrate them into social-emotional learning. Under the new law, "ableism" means intentional or unintentional bias, prejudice, or discrimination, against people with physical, psychiatric, or intellectual disabilities. The task force must submit its findings and recommendations to the Children's and Education committees by January 1, 2023 ([PA 22-80](#), § 10, effective upon passage).

Emotional Disability and Special Education

The legislature passed a law this session requiring the state Department of Education (SDE) and boards of education, beginning July 1, 2022, to use the term "emotional disability" instead of "emotional disturbance" when administering and providing special education ([PA 22-47](#), § 67, effective upon passage).

Mental Health Plans for Student Athletes

A new law requires SDE to establish, and boards of education to implement, a mental health plan for student athletes to raise awareness about available resources. Among other things, the plan

must cover screening and recognizing appropriate referrals for student athletes, as well as crisis intervention services ([PA 22-81](#), §§ 3 & 4, effective July 1, 2022).

Office of Higher Education (OHE) Grants for Mental Health Services

A new law requires OHE to administer a grant program for FYs 23-25 to provide funding to public and private colleges and universities for delivery of student mental health services. Applicants must submit a plan for grant fund spending, and grant recipients must file annual expenditure reports with the office. The executive director determines grant amounts using the guidelines established in the law for each FY ([PA 22-47](#), § 15, effective upon passage).

Paraeducators at PPT Meetings

This year, the legislature passed a law requiring school districts to provide (1) advance notice to a paraeducator of a parent's invitation to a planning and placement team (PPT) meeting and (2) training on his or her role at the meeting upon request. The law also requires that the paraeducator attending the meeting, or any other paraeducator serving the student, be allowed to view the individual education program that results from the meeting ([PA 22-116](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2022).

Recovery High Schools

A new law requires the Connecticut Prevention Network to develop a report by January 1, 2024, about high schools designed for students in recovery from substance use disorder or co-occurring disorders. The report must address (1) how other states implemented and integrated recovery high schools into their public school system and (2) these schools' potential implementation in Connecticut ([PA 22-116](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2022).

School Resource Officer Impact Study on Students With Disabilities

A new law requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education to select an institute of higher learning to (1) study school resources officers' role and impact on students with disabilities and (2) report its findings to the Judiciary Committee by December 1, 2022. Among other things, the study must develop metrics for assessing the officers' efficacy, particularly in the context of interacting with students with disabilities and detail the funding mechanisms for employing these officers ([PA 22-114](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

SDE Grants for Mental Health Specialists and Services

A new law requires SDE to administer a new grant program for FYs 23-25 to provide boards of education with funding to hire student mental health specialists. Applicant boards must submit a plan for grant fund spending, and grant recipients must file annual expenditure reports with SDE.

The commissioner determines grant amounts using the guidelines established in the law for each FY ([PA 22-47](#), § 13, effective July 1, 2022).

The department must also administer a second new grant program to fund boards of education, youth camps, and other summer program operators for the delivery of student mental health services. This program follows the same parameters for the same fiscal years as the one described above ([PA 22-47](#), § 14, effective upon passage).

Student Mental Health Specialist Employment Survey

A new law requires SDE to annually survey boards of education about their employment of various student mental health specialists. Based on the survey results, the SDE commissioner must calculate student-to-specialist ratios for districts and schools and report them to the Education and Children’s committees ([PA 22-47](#), § 12, effective upon passage).

Healthcare Access and Eligibility

Ban on Non-Compete Home Care Contracts

This year the General Assembly prohibited contracts between a homemaker-companion agency or home health agency and a client from including a “no-hire” clause that, should the client directly hire an agency employee, (1) imposes a financial penalty; (2) assesses any charges or fees, including legal fees; or (3) contains any language that can create grounds for a breach of contract assertion or a claim for damages or injunctive relief. The new law expressly deems these clauses against public policy and void ([PA 22-118](#), §§ 244 & 245, effective upon passage).

Community Ombudsman Program

This session, the legislature created a Community Ombudsman program within the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Among other things, the act authorizes the program to (1) respond to complaints about long-term services and supports provided to adults in home- and community-based programs administered by DSS, including personal care and social services for people with physical, cognitive, or mental health conditions or disabilities and (2) provide referrals to home care clients for legal, housing, and social services ([PA 22-146](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2022).

Covered Connecticut

A new law expands the Covered Connecticut program by, among other things, requiring the program to provide health insurance coverage to certain family members of people who are otherwise eligible, including (1) permanently and totally disabled children over age 26 and (2) children older than age 26 who are incapable of self-sustaining employment due to a mental or physical handicap

and who are dependent on the parent or caretaker relative for support and maintenance ([PA 22-118](#), §§ 251 & 252, effective upon passage).

Medical Assistance and Immigration

This session, the legislature expanded a program that requires DSS to provide state-funded medical assistance, within available appropriations, to children regardless of their immigration status. The act expanded the program by raising the age of children eligible for the coverage from 8 to 12 years old and allowing eligible children to receive the assistance until they are 19 years old. By law, and under the act, the requirement begins January 1, 2023 ([PA 22-118](#), §§ 232 & 233, effective upon passage).

Medical Marijuana

A new law extends to physician assistants the ability to certify a patient for medical marijuana use (except for glaucoma). Beginning July 1, 2023, it also eliminates the fees for (1) renewing a patient or caregiver registration (currently \$25) and (2) administrative costs associated with issuing or renewing registrations (currently \$75 for qualifying patients) or any other fee in addition to the registration fee ([PA 22-103](#), §§ 11-20, various effective dates).

Medication Administration by Unlicensed Personnel

A new law allows a registered nurse (RN) to delegate the administration of non-injected medications to home health aides and hospice aides who are currently certified by the departments of Children and Families (DCF) or Developmental Services (DDS), in addition to those certified by DPH as under existing law.

By law, RNs cannot delegate medication administration to these unlicensed personnel if a prescribing practitioner requires a medication to be administered only by a licensed nurse. Also, residential care homes that admit residents requiring medication administration assistance must employ enough unlicensed personnel certified by DPH, DCF, or DDS to perform this function ([PA 22-58](#), §§ 12 & 13, effective October 1, 2022).

Probate Court Orders and Medicaid Eligibility

A new generally requires each state agency that is a party to a probate court proceeding to recognize and apply any probate court order, denial, or decree issued on or after October 1, 2022. This applies (1) to the extent allowed by federal law and (2) as long as the probate court has the statutory jurisdiction to issue the order, denial, or decree. The act specifically allows someone aggrieved by such a probate court decision to appeal to Superior Court.

The act also requires DSS to compile annual data on the denial of Medicaid eligibility in any matter in which a probate court issued an order or decree about assets or income that, according to DSS, affected someone's Medicaid eligibility. Starting by January 1, 2024, DSS must annually report on specified related matters to the Judiciary and Human Services committees ([PA 22-112](#), effective October 1, 2022).

Technical Standards for Medical Diagnostic Equipment

Starting January 1, 2023, a new law requires health care facilities to take into consideration certain federal technical standards for accessibility of medical diagnostic equipment (e.g., examination tables, weight scales, and radiological diagnostic equipment) when purchasing this equipment. Specifically, facilities must consider the technical standards developed by the federal Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB) in accordance with the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Starting by December 1, 2022, the new law requires DPH to annually notify each health care facility and licensed physician, physician assistant, and advanced practice registered nurse about information on providing health care to individuals with accessibility needs, including the ATBCB technical standards. The act applies to hospitals, outpatient clinics, and long-term care or hospice facilities ([PA 22-58](#), § 73, upon passage).

Transplant Non-Discrimination Based on Disability

A new law generally prohibits deeming someone ineligible to receive an anatomical gift, or organ from a living donor, for transplantation solely because of the person's physical, mental, or intellectual disability. The act provides an exception if a physician determines, after evaluating the person, that his or her disability medically contraindicates the acceptance of the anatomical gift or organ. If a person has the necessary support to help him or her comply with post-transplant medical requirements, then the person's inability to comply without assistance cannot be determined "medically significant" ([PA 22-58](#), § 51, effective upon passage).

Long-Term Care Facilities, Hospitals, and Other Facilities

Certificate of Need (CON) for Mental Health Facilities

A new law exempts from CON requirements increases in the licensed bed capacity of mental health facilities, through June 30, 2026. To be eligible, a mental health facility must demonstrate to the Office of Health Strategy's (OHS) Health Systems Planning Unit that it accepts reimbursement for any covered benefit to covered individuals under certain types of private or public insurance plans.

The act also requires the OHS executive director, by January 1, 2025, to report to the governor and the Public Health Committee her recommendations, if any, on establishing an expedited CON process for mental health facilities ([PA 22-47](#), § 31, effective upon passage).

CON for Nursing Homes and Other Facilities

This year, the legislature made various changes to DSS's certificate of need (CON) process for certain long-term care facilities. Among other things, the act allows DSS to approve requests to build nontraditional, small-house style nursing homes under certain conditions and establishes factors DSS must consider when considering these requests. It also (1) broadens other exemptions to the general moratorium on nursing home beds, and (2) adds additional criteria that DSS must consider when evaluating certain types of CON requests, including requests to relocate beds ([PA 22-145](#), §§ 6-9, effective July 1, 2022).

DPH Grant to Children's Hospital

A new law allows DPH, within available resources, to award a \$150,000 grant in FY 23 to an in-state children's hospital for coordinating a mental and behavioral health training and consultation program for pediatricians in 2023 and 2024 ([PA 22-47](#), § 69, effective July 1, 2022).

Infection Prevention and Control Specialists

A new law makes various changes in requirements for infection prevention and control specialists at nursing homes and dementia special care units. For example, it (1) limits the requirement that they employ a full-time specialist to only those facilities with more than 60 residents, instead requiring a part-time specialist for smaller facilities and (2) allows these specialists to provide services at both a nursing home and dementia special care unit or at two nursing homes in some circumstances with DPH approval ([PA 22-58](#), § 52, effective July 1, 2022).

Strike Contingency Plans

By law, a licensed health care institution must file a strike contingency plan with the DPH commissioner if the institution is notified by a labor organization representing its employees of its intention to strike. A new law requires each institution, as part of the strike contingency plan, to include its staffing plan for at least the first three days of the strike. This must include the names and titles of the people who will provide services during this period. Existing regulations already require similar information for certain types of institutions, such as nursing homes and residential care homes (Conn. Agencies Regs., § 19a-497-1) ([PA 22-58](#), § 10, effective July 1, 2022).

Whiting Forensic Hospital

In response to the 2021 final report of the Connecticut Valley Hospital and Whiting Forensic Hospital Task Force, the legislature enacted a law affecting the oversight of Whiting Forensic Hospital (WFH) and acquittees (i.e., those found not guilty of a crime due to a mental disease or defect). Among other things, the act (1) requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to develop a plan to construct a new WFH facility and submit a comprehensive report on the plan to the Public Health Committee by January 1, 2024; (2) reestablishes WFH's 11-member advisory board as an oversight board and expands the board's duties; and (3) allows an acquittee, or a person acting on his or her behalf, to apply to the Psychiatric Security Review Board for a temporary leave order allowing the acquittee to spend time in the community, under certain conditions ([PA 22-45](#), various effective dates).

Mental Health Outside of Educational Settings

DMHAS Advertising Campaign

A new law requires DMHAS, by January 1, 2023, and in collaboration with DCF, to (1) plan and implement a statewide advertising campaign on the availability of mental or behavioral health and substance use disorder services in the state and (2) set up a comprehensive website with related information ([PA 22-47](#), § 39, effective upon passage).

DMHAS Mobile Crisis Response Services

A new law requires, for FY 23 and each year after, DMHAS to make mobile crisis response services available to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week ([PA 22-81](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2022).

Emergency Certificates for Psychiatric Evaluation

A new law allows licensed professional counselors and marital and family therapists to issue emergency certificates directing a person with psychiatric disabilities to be taken to a hospital for evaluation. To do so, the counselor or therapist must, among other things, be a member of certain DMHAS community support programs or crisis teams and have completed at least eight hours of specialized training in conducting direct evaluations. Existing law already allows clinical social workers and APRNs who meet the training requirements to do this ([PA 22-92](#), § 4, effective October 1, 2022).

Mental and Behavioral Health Services at Prisons

A new law requires the Department of Correction (DOC) commissioner to develop a plan, with specified components, for providing health care services to inmates at DOC correctional

institutions, including mental health and substance use disorder services. By February 1, 2023, the commissioner must report to the Public Health and Judiciary committees on the plan along with recommendations for any legislation needed to implement it and an implementation timeline ([PA 22-133](#), effective upon passage).

Another new law requires the DOC commissioner to annually review, evaluate, and make recommendations on (1) substance use disorder and mental health services for incarcerated individuals and (2) reintegrating these individuals into the community. In doing so, the commissioner must consult with DMHAS and the judicial branch. Starting by January 1, 2023, the commissioner must annually report on this review to the Appropriations, Judiciary, and Public Health committees ([PA 22-118](#), § 207, effective upon passage).

Protocols for EMS Transport to DCF-Licensed Urgent Crisis Centers

Under a new law, DPH's Office of Emergency Medical Services, by January 1, 2024, must develop protocols for emergency medical services organizations or providers to transport pediatric patients with mental or behavioral health needs by ambulance to DCF-licensed urgent crisis centers ([PA 22-47](#), § 46, effective October 1, 2022).

Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy

A new law requires DMHAS to establish a psychedelic-assisted therapy pilot program, within available appropriations, administered by a Connecticut medical school. The pilot program must provide Connecticut veterans, retired first responders, or direct health care workers with MDMA (i.e., "Molly" or "ecstasy") or psilocybin-assisted therapy as part of a research program approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Under the act, the pilot program ends when the FDA approves MDMA and psilocybin for medical use ([PA 22-146](#), § 20, effective July 1, 2022).

Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations

The session, the legislature codified existing practice by (1) allowing the DMHAS commissioner to contract with one or more nonprofit organizations to operate as Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs) and (2) repealing the laws that established the prior Regional Action Councils and Regional Mental Health Boards (which were replaced by RBHAOs). It requires each RBHAO to serve as a strategic community partner responsible for, among other things, behavioral health planning, education, and promotion.

The act makes other related changes. For example, as of October 1, 2022, it reduces the membership of the state's Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services and makes other

changes affecting the board ([PA 22-69](#), effective upon passage, except the provisions on the Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services take effect October 1, 2022).

Suicide Advisory Board

A new law codifies existing practice by expanding the scope of the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Youth Suicide Advisory Board to address suicide prevention across a person's lifespan. It correspondingly renames the board as the Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board, reflecting existing practice. The act also revises the board's membership and procedures in several respects ([PA 22-58](#), §§ 64 & 66, effective July 1, 2022).

Suicide Prevention Hotline Fund

A 2020 federal law designated 9-8-8 as the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline, scheduled to be operational on July 16, 2022. This year, the General Assembly established the "9-8-8 Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline Fund" as a separate, non-lapsing General Fund account. DMHAS must use the account's funds only for (1) ensuring the efficient and effective routing of in-state calls made to 9-8-8 to an appropriate crisis center and (2) personnel and the provision of acute mental health, crisis outreach, and stabilization services by directly responding to 9-8-8.

By January 1, 2024, DMHAS must also develop a mechanism to track services provided in response to 9-8-8 calls. The department must report on that mechanism by February 1, 2024 ([PA 22-47](#), §§ 25 & 27, various effective dates).

Provider Rates, Retention, and Recruitment

Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Grant Program

A new law requires DPH, by January 1, 2023, to establish a child and adolescent psychiatrist grant program, providing incentive grants to employers for recruiting, hiring, and retaining these psychiatrists. Starting by January 1, 2024, the commissioner must annually report on the program to the Public Health Committee ([PA 22-47](#), § 38, effective upon passage).

Expedited Licensure for Certain Health Care Providers

This session, the legislature expanded an existing law on expedited licensure for health care providers licensed in other states by eliminating prior provisions limiting it only to state residents or spouses of active-duty military members stationed in Connecticut. This law applies to providers who meet specified experience and background requirements ([PA 22-47](#), § 2, effective October 1, 2022).

Interstate Compacts

A new law enters Connecticut into two health care-related interstate compacts, the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact and the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact. The medical compact provides an expedited licensure process for physicians seeking to practice in multiple states (including by telehealth). The psychology compact provides a process authorizing psychologists to practice by (1) telehealth (unlimited) and (2) temporary in-person, face-to-face services (30 days per year per state) across state boundaries, without the psychologist having to be licensed in each of the states ([PA 22-81](#), §§ 42 & 43, effective October 1, 2022).

Licensure by Reciprocity for Speech and Language Pathologists or Occupational Therapists

A new law requires DPH, in consultation with the Office of Early Childhood, to develop and implement a plan to establish licensure by reciprocity or endorsement for speech and language pathologists or occupational therapists licensed elsewhere and who intend to provide services under the Birth-to-Three program. By January 1, 2023, the DPH commissioner must implement and report on the plan to the Public Health and Children's committees, including recommendations for any necessary related legislation ([PA 22-81](#), § 26, effective upon passage).

OHS Payment Parity Study

A new law requires OHS, in consultation with the insurance and DSS commissioners, to study certain issues related to payment parity for behavioral and mental health and other providers in HUSKY Health and the private insurance market. The OHS executive director must submit a report with interim study results by January 1, 2023, and a final report by January 1, 2024, to the Appropriations, Human Services, Insurance, and Public Health committees ([PA 22-47](#), § 58, effective upon passage).

Physician Recruitment Working Group

Under a new law, the DPH commissioner, by January 1, 2023, must convene a working group to advise her on ways to enhance physician recruitment in the state. Among other issues, the group must examine recruiting, retaining, and compensating primary care, psychiatric, and behavioral health care providers. The group must report its findings to the commissioner and the Public Health Committee by January 1, 2024 ([PA 22-81](#), § 29, effective July 1, 2022).

Provider Rates

Laws passed this year include several provisions affecting rates and payments for various types of providers, including:

1. increasing the minimum per diem, per bed rate to \$501 for intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities ([PA 22-118](#), § 230, effective July 1, 2022);
2. increasing the Medicaid per diem reimbursement rate for hospitals by \$500 for beds provided to patients on ventilators ([PA 22-118](#), § 238, effective July 1, 2022);
3. prohibiting state agencies that contract with health and human services providers from trying to recover or otherwise offset federal ARPA funds for home- and community-based services ([PA 22-146](#), § 15, effective upon passage);
4. requiring that OPM disburse certain unallocated funds as cost-of-living-adjustments for state-contracted providers delivering services and supports through DDS ([PA 22-118](#), § 249, effective upon passage);
5. requiring the Office of Early Childhood commissioner to make a \$200 general administrative payment to early intervention service providers for each child with an individualized family service plan that accounts for less than nine service hours during the billing month ([PA 22-81](#), § 12, effective July 1, 2022);
6. requiring DSS to provide Medicaid payments to private practice independent behavioral health clinicians for services performed by certain other clinicians under their supervision ([PA 22-81](#), § 25, effective July 1, 2022); and
7. requiring DSS to implement a Medicaid reimbursement system that incentivizes collaboration between primary care providers and behavioral and mental health care providers ([PA 22-47](#), § 59, effective July 1, 2022).

Waiver for Licensure Requirements for Certain Mental or Behavioral Health Providers

A new law requires DPH, in consultation with DCF, to develop and implement a plan to waive licensure requirements for mental or behavioral health care providers licensed in other states, with priority given to children’s providers. Among other things, the act provides that (1) for this waiver to apply, the other state’s requirements for practicing must be substantially similar to, or higher than, Connecticut’s requirements and (2) in developing the plan, DPH must decide whether the waiver should be limited to telehealth. By January 1, 2023, DPH must implement and report on the plan ([PA 22-47](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

Service Animals

Dog Licenses for Service Animals and Therapy Animals

A new law requires town clerks to provide a person with a disability (i.e., an intellectual, physical, mental, or learning disability) a license and tag, at no cost, for his or her dog that is a trained service animal, animal in training to become a service animal, or therapy animal enrolled in the

Department of Children and Families Animal Assistance Intervention Program ([PA 22-54](#), § 5, effective June 1, 2023).

State Agencies and State Library

DDS-Related Statutes

A new law makes various changes to Department of Developmental Services (DDS)-related statutes, such as:

1. allowing the DDS commissioner to require anyone applying for a job with an individual funded by DDS for self-directed services to submit to a check for substantiated complaints in the DCF child abuse and neglect registry;
2. specifically allowing the DDS commissioner's designee, rather than just the commissioner, to perform various tasks related to the probate court process when someone files a petition to place a person with DDS for services;
3. repealing laws (a) requiring DDS to, among other things, coordinate family support services for children with disabilities and (b) establishing the Family Support Council;
4. allowing any DDS-licensed residential facility to participate in energy use assessment programs under the state's Conservation and Load Management Plan and requiring facilities to give DDS a copy of any energy assessment report; and
5. increasing, from \$101,000 to \$125,000, the cost allowance cap for executive director salaries in state agencies' calculations of grants to private agencies that provide employment opportunities, day services, or residential facility services ([PA 22-140](#), various effective dates).

State Agency Website Requirements

A new law requires several state agencies to provide online information on services they provide. Specifically, the act requires the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) to establish a webpage with information on services for deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing people, including services it provides and those provided by DCF, DMHAS, and DSS. Under the act, DCF, DMHAS, and DSS must maintain on their websites information on services for people with disabilities and link to ADS's page on services for deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing people ([PA 22-31](#), §§ 3-5, effective October 1, 2022).

State Library Board Consultation

A new law requires the State Library Board to consult with the ADS commissioner and the library's advisory committee for blind and physically disabled persons before making changes that could

diminish or substantively change the federally-required library service for the blind and other persons with disabilities. ([PA 22-118](#), § 90, effective July 1, 2022).

Substance Use Disorder

Auricular Acupuncture

Existing law allows unlicensed individuals who are certified by the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association to practice auricular acupuncture to treat alcohol and drug abuse under certain supervision and in DPH-licensed freestanding substance abuse facilities, DMHAS-operated settings, or any other setting where it is an appropriate adjunct therapy to a substance abuse or behavioral health treatment. A new law allows these individuals to practice under the supervision of a PA, APRN, or licensed acupuncturist, instead of only a physician as under prior law ([PA 22-92](#), § 7, effective October 1, 2022).

DMHAS Opioid Use Disorder Pilot Program

Existing law requires DMHAS to establish a pilot program, within available appropriations, in up to five urban, suburban, and rural communities to serve individuals with opioid use disorder. Each community participating in the program must form a team of at least two peer navigators who must, among other things, (1) travel throughout the community to address the health care and social needs of individuals with opioid use disorder and (2) be trained on non-coercive and non-stigmatizing ways to engage these individuals, as determined by the DMHAS commissioner.

A new law extends, by one year until January 1, 2023, the date by which DMHAS must establish the program ([PA 22-108](#), § 7, effective upon passage).

Mobile Units for Dispensing Controlled Substances

A new law allows practitioners authorized to prescribe controlled substances to treat patients by dispensing controlled substances (e.g., methadone) from a mobile unit. To do so, the prescribing practitioner must take certain actions, such as notifying the Department of Consumer Protection of his or her intent to transport and dispense the controlled substances and report the dispensing to the state's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program ([PA 22-108](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2022).

Multicare Institutions

A new law allows multicare institutions (e.g., hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, and freestanding substance abuse treatment facilities) to provide behavioral health services or substance use disorder treatment services to patients in a mobile narcotic treatment program. Existing law already allows multicare institutions to provide these services at a satellite unit or other off-site location, so

long as they provide DPH a list of these locations on their initial or licensure renewal application ([PA 22-108](#), § 4, effective July 1, 2022).

Prescription Opioid Patient Care Plans

A new law adds chiropractic and spinal cord stimulation to the list of nonopioid treatment options that must be included on a patient’s treatment agreement or care plan that prescribing practitioners must provide when prescribing opioids for more than 12 weeks. Existing law already requires the agreement or plan to include manipulation, massage therapy, physical therapy, and other treatment regimens or modalities ([PA 22-108](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2022).

Voting

Absentee Voting

This year the legislature expanded two of the six statutory reasons for which qualified voters (i.e., electors and people eligible to vote in a referendum) may vote by absentee ballot in an election, primary, or referendum. Under newly enacted legislation, qualified voters may vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at their polling place because of (1) sickness, rather than because of their own illness, or (2) physical disability, rather than because of their own physical disability ([PA 22-2](#), effective upon passage).

Miscellaneous

In addition to the acts summarized above, other acts make minor changes that may affect people with disabilities. These acts include the following:

1. [PA 22-116](#), § 3 (extends the special education services and funding task force's report due date by two years, from January 1, 2022, to January 1, 2024);
2. [PA 22-89](#) (makes many minor and technical changes in workers’ compensation); and
3. [PA 22-21](#) (removes the governor’s liaison to the disability community from the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deafblind).

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