
OLR BILL ANALYSIS

sSB 337

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SILVER ALERT SYSTEM.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the state's clearinghouse for missing persons to collect, process, maintain, and disseminate information to help locate patients reported missing, in accordance with the bill's specifications, from any Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) facility. It adds DMHAS employees certified as police officers to those individuals authorized under current law to file reports for clearinghouse action. It establishes separate procedures for DMHAS reports.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2012

MISSING PERSONS CLEARINGHOUSE

By law, this clearinghouse serves as a repository of information on missing people. Under current law, when anyone age 65 or older or 18 or older with a mental impairment is reported missing by specified individuals, the clearinghouse must collect, process, maintain, and disseminate information to help locate him or her. (This is commonly referred to as the SILVER Alert system--see BACKGROUND.)

The people authorized to file reports under current law are: the missing person's relative, guardian; conservator, attorney, health care representative, or nursing home administrator. The department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) must prepare the reports. (In practice, the people designated above make the reports to a police department, which makes the request to the clearinghouse.)

The bill allows relatives, guardians, or conservators of a missing person receiving inpatient services at a DMHAS facility to ask the DMHAS commissioner to file a report with DESPP for clearinghouse

purposes. And it allows DMHAS, notwithstanding current laws barring disclosure of certain information deemed confidential, to authorize DMHAS employees certified as police officers by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council to file the report. The report must disclose only the minimal amount of information necessary for receiving clearinghouse assistance.

BACKGROUND

Emergency Notification System

The clearing house disseminates information using an emergency notification system. In practice, an individual files a missing person report with a police department, which investigates and contacts the clearinghouse. Based on the report, the clearing house issues a SILVER Alert for people age 65 or older or 18 or older with a mental impairment or an AMBER Alert for children. This involves broadcasting local, regional, or statewide alerts on radio, television, and electronic highway signs.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 23 Nay 0 (03/13/2012)