

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 12-48—sSB 337

Public Safety and Security Committee

Public Health Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SILVER ALERT SYSTEM

SUMMARY: This act allows the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) commissioner to authorize DMHAS employees certified as police officers to file missing person reports with the state's clearinghouse for missing persons. The clearinghouse, which is within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), operates a SILVER Alert system to help locate seniors and mentally impaired adults reported missing by specified individuals. The act requires the clearinghouse to provide assistance when DMHAS police officers file such reports.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2012

MISSING PERSONS CLEARINGHOUSE

By law, the clearinghouse is a repository of information on missing persons.

It must, among other things, collect, process, maintain, and disseminate information to help locate missing persons age 65 or older or at least age 18 with a mental impairment if a report prepared by DESPP has been filed by the missing person's relative, guardian, conservator, attorney, health care representative, or nursing home administrator. In practice, any police department may prepare the report for clearinghouse action.

The act 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 assistance. And it allows the DMHAS commissioner, notwithstanding laws barring disclosure of certain information deemed confidential, to authorize DMHAS employees certified as police officers to file the report. The report must disclose only the minimum information necessary for receiving clearinghouse assistance.

BACKGROUND

Emergency Notification System

The clearinghouse uses an emergency notification system to disseminate information on people reported missing. The system issues local, regional, or statewide alerts on radio, television, and electronic highway signs. It issues (1) SILVER Alerts for missing people age 65 or older or at least age 18 with a mental impairment and (2) AMBER Alerts for children.

OLR Tracking: VR:SN-E:JSL:DY:eh