

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-168

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL
SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING GROUP HOME LICENSING

Title: VISITS.

Vote Date: 3/9/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/28/2018

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Currently, DDS is required to adopt regulations that establish at least half of visits to community living arrangements (group homes) and community companion homes be unannounced. This bill removes that requirement and allows the commissioner to adopt regulations establishing a minimum number of unannounced licensure-related visits for community living arrangements.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Developmental Services: Special Act No. 17-21 created a working group consisting of representatives from DDS, DMAS, DCF and DPH. The group was charged with developing recommendations aimed at reducing the administrative burden associated with unannounced visits to community living settings (group homes). This legislation gives the Commissioner of DDS more flexibility and discretion in scheduling unannounced visits to community group homes run by private providers. The legislation would not prohibit DDS from making unannounced visits for audit purposes of if there are concerns with the operation of a particular home. Reducing the number of administrative requirements would allow more time to address the needs of the individuals served in these communities.

Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services: DMAS supports the workgroup recommendations developed in **Special Act No. 17-21** including this legislative proposal that will lessen the administrative impact on certain nonprofit community providers.

Raul Pino, M. D., M.P.H., Commissiner, Connecticut Department of Public Health: The Department of Public Health supports the recommendations outlined in this bill that would reduce the administrative burden of the licensure and inspection process for the community provider facilities.

Connecticut Department of Children and Families: Pursuant to **Special Act No. 21-17**, DCF worked with the DDS, DMHAS, DPH OPM and nonprofit providers to conduct a Lean review of certification and licensure processes in our respective agencies. The Department supports the recommendations outlined in this proposal which would make the licensing process more efficient. DCF also brought to the Committee's attention that the department submitted a proposal to the Committee on Children to exempt DDS's Continuous Residential Support (CRS) homes from DCF lincensure.

State Senator Michael A. McLachlin, S 24: The senator supports legislation that promotes lean government as it may add to more efficiency in running state government.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Mary Beth O'Neill, Key Human Services, Inc. Ms. O'Neill submitted testimony in support of this proposal which allows the Commissioner of DDS more discretion and flexibility in scheduling announced and unannounced visits. Ms. O'Neill shared experiences involving some visits to her facility which resulted in significant disruptions to the staff as they attended to the needs of the individuals in their care. This legislation reduces such disruptions permitting staff to maintain the delivery of services needed to assist the individuals in their care.

Ms. O'Neill also requested that the language of the bill be amended to remove the regulatory requirement that licensure applications be notarized. Documents can now be signed electronically. Providers can use a private identification number to sign documents and any uploads are time and date stamped. Reducing paper processes and utilizing electronic capabilities enhances accuracy and reduces costs.

Anne Ruwet, Chief Executive Officer of CCARC: Submitted testimony in support of this proposal. Allowing the Commissioner of DDS discretion to make announced and unannounced visits would remove the administrative burden associated with unannounced visits. This would reduce the amount of time staff would be unable to deliver services to the individuals in their care.

Ms. Ruwet also requested that the proposed language be amended to remove the requirement that licensure applications be notarized.

Stan Solby, Vice President, Public Policy and External Affairs, Oak Hill: Submitted testimony in support of SB 168 indicating that the legislation will reduce the burden of administrative tasks allowing more time to be with the individuals the cared for by private providers.

Peter Engelbrecht, Residential Director, MARC, INC of Manchester: Supports this proposal which will lessen the administrative burden on Community Providers and make available valuable resources to continue serving people in need.

Mr. Engelbrecht also requests that the proposed language be amended to remove the requirement that licensure applications be notarized.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None

Reported by: Kathleen Panazza

Date: 3/12/18