OLR Bill Analysis

HB 7000 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH), starting by June 30, 2020, and within available appropriations, to annually compile a list of available training programs for certain first responders regarding individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), nonverbal learning disorder (NLD), and cognitive impairment. DPH must make the list available to those first responders annually by July 1. The bill permits DPH to accept private donations for these purposes.

The bill also requires the UConn Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities to develop a communication aid for certain first responders to use to communicate with individuals with ASD, NLD, or cognitive impairment during emergencies when verbal communication may be hindered or impossible. The center must publish the communication aid on its website by December 1, 2019.

Additionally, the bill requires the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control to establish an optional fire service training and education program on handling incidents, such as wandering, that involve juveniles and adults with ASD, NLD, or cognitive impairment. The curriculum must be available for free from (1) higher education institutions, health care professionals, or advocacy organizations that are concerned with this population or (2) collaborations of such entities.

Lastly, current law requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to include, in its training on juvenile matters for state and local police, techniques for handling incidents involving

juveniles with ASD or NLD. Starting January 1, 2020, the bill expands this training requirement to include techniques for handling incidents involving juveniles and adults with ASD, NLD, or cognitive impairment. As under current law, the training must be provided for free. The bill makes corresponding changes to the criteria for the entities that may provide such training.

*House Amendment "A" replaces the underlying bill, which required the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to study whether policy and procedural changes may increase effectiveness of DCF services.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except the provision that makes changes to the police training requirements is effective January 1, 2020.

LIST OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

Under the bill, the training programs DPH includes in its annual list must be approved by the DPH commissioner and include techniques for handling incidents, such as wandering, that involve juveniles and adults with ASD, NLD, and cognitive impairment. The programs may be offered by (1) higher education institutions, health care professionals, and advocacy organizations concerned with this population and (2) collaborations of such entities.

The training programs must be available for members of commercial ambulance and rescue services, volunteer and municipal ambulance services, ambulance and paramedic intercept services operated and maintained by a state agency, and emergency medical services personnel.

COMMUNICATION AID

Under the bill, the UConn Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities must develop a communication aid for use by emergency medical services personnel, firefighters, police officers, active members of licensed or certified ambulance services, emergency mobile psychiatric services personnel, and mental health crisis intervention services personnel.

The communication aid must describe techniques for serving and interacting with juveniles and adults with ASD, NLD, and cognitive impairment and contain communication aids to use during emergencies when verbal communication may be hindered or impossible.

By December 1, 2019, the center must publish the aid on its website. The bill requires the above personnel, starting January 1, 2020, to maintain a paper or electronic copy of the aid in any vehicle they use in the course of their duties.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable
Yea   14   Nay   0   (03/07/2019)