

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-141

AN ACT DESIGNATING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND
Title: ADDICTION SERVICES A SINGLE HEALTH CARE ENTITY.

Vote Date: 3/4/2020

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/26/2020

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill allows the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to establish a single electronic health record (EHR) system that permits authorized personnel to access patient health information, including psychiatric records, from any of the department's divisions and facilitates. The legislation requires all DMHAS divisions and facilitates to provide their patient records to the EHR system. Disclosure of such patient information must be in accordance with all state and federal laws.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner, The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS): Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon explained that DMHAS encompasses two hospitals and seven facilities providing community-based services to over 15,000 individuals with behavioral health disorders.

Many clients of the department receive multiple services for several years resulting in voluminous records. These patients often transfer between facilities for services. Since, by statute, DMHAS facilities are considered separate entities, the current process to obtain patient records is cumbersome and inefficient, requiring appropriate releases and then faxing secure information between facilities even though each facility is operated by DMHAS.

This bill is a first step to allow DMHAS to implement an agency-wide Electronic Health Record (EHR) that would allow the agency to access and share patient health information in real time between all its facilities. As separate entities, each DMHAS facility would be required to purchase their own EHR. However, recognizing all DMHAS facilities as a single health care entity would allow the use of one electronic medication record, order entry and prescribing system to be used by the appropriate clinical staff. Such a system would allow for more efficient and consistent real-time documentation across all DMHAS hospitals and clinics.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None submitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted.

Reported by: Kathleen Panazza

Date: March 10, 2020