

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6666

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S
RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC

Title: HEALTH STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/31/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/29/2021

File No.: 539

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Health Committee
Department of Public Health

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill makes various substantive, minor, and technical changes in Department of Public Health (DPH) related statutes and programs.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH, Acting Commissioner, Department of Public Health (DPH):

Dr. Gifford and DPH provided testimony in support of the Department bill, HB 6666.

- Revise the statutes surrounding students studying the funeral service business.
- Changes the regulatory requirement for an annual TB test for people working in healthcare settings.
- Requires licensed clinical blood collection facilities to report closings and openings of said facilities and whenever they apply for or renew their license.
- Inserts person-first language with complete support of the Department.
- Allows a licensed massage therapist to operate a spa or salon.
- Makes technical revisions to emergency medical services regulations by removing outdated terminology, "ambulances", and replaces it with "emergency medical responder".
- Adds "a thrombectomy-capable stroke center" to the list of centers included on the list of certified stroke centers.

- Defines the term "certified homeless youth" and allows access to their birth certificates and motor vehicle records without a fee.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Matthew V. Barrett, President, CEO, Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities and the Connecticut Center for Assisted Living (CAHCF/CCAL):

Mr. Barrett and CAHCF/CCAL support HB 6666 with one modification to the language of Section 54 regarding the space between beds. The Commissioner's order requires 6 feet of space between each bed to promote resident care and function but does not create a restraint or hazard for the resident. Her order also satisfies existing Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance regarding social distancing as needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, this bill does not make specific reference to the six feet bed positioning guidance. CAHCF/CCAL requests language to authorize the prevailing federal and state public health guidelines without specific reference to a distance.

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF):

CWEALF supports this bill and submits testimony in support of Section 70. This change will waive the fees associated with a certified copy of a birth certificate and state identification card for homeless youth. Removing this financial barrier allows homeless youth the opportunity to receive documents necessary to secure employment, apply to college, secure a license to drive, and apply for federal and state nutrition and healthcare benefits.

Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance):

Mr. Shaiken and The Alliance support Section 16 of this bill to make necessary changes for Licensed Professional Counselors receiving the new associate licensure. HB 6666 repairs the unintentional consequences of a law passed in 2019 that prevents Licensed Professional Counselor Associates and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Associates from continuing to work under the supervision of a licensed clinician once they have met the stringent educational requirements. This bill adds grandfathering language to allow anyone who graduates from an accredited program by July 1, 2022, to continue providing critical services for many of the neediest in our communities.

Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA):

Ms. Gara and the CWWA support Sections 1 and 2 of this bill as written and Sections 3-4 with slight changes. DPH is required to send a receipt of request after the water companies submit a request to conduct activities near a public water supply to Zoning, Planning & Zoning, and Zoning Boards of Appeals. CWWA requests the addition of electronic mail as an allowable communication method from DPH to water companies.

Lori Vitagliano, Government and Public Relations Specialist, Regional Water Authority (RWA):

Ms. Vitagliano and RWA support this bill and request the addition of language that would allow DPH to send notices to affected water companies via electronic mail via the email address listed on their website. Applicants of a development project are allowed to use electronic notification tools and RWA would like this same option available to water companies.

Omena McCoy, Senior Policy Analyst, Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH):

Ms. McCoy and CCEH support Section 70 of HB 6666, as do the 100 plus member agencies of the CCEH. The ability to receive a birth certificate and state identification card free of charge is critical for young people experiencing homelessness. Without these documents, they face even more significant, if not insurmountable, challenges to escape a life of homelessness.

Deb Polun, Executive Director, Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA):

Ms. Polun and the CAFCA support Sections 70-72 in HB 6666. Safe and stable housing are critical components of a holistic approach to end homelessness and break the cycle of poverty. The state is lifting a tremendous barrier by eliminating the issuance fees required to obtain a copy of their birth certificate and a state identification card for homeless youths, a vulnerable group of residents.

The CAFCA and the nine associated Community Action Agencies (CAA) support people living in poverty and connect them to state and federal programs and resources to provide basic needs such as training and employment, housing, childcare, and nutrition resources. However, it is nearly impossible for our homeless youth to access these resources as they require a state identification card.

This small but mighty change will have a tremendous impact on our homeless youth, and CAFCA appreciates the time and attention from this committee.

Patrizia Cavone:

Ms. Cavone is a licensed cosmetologist in the state. HB 6666 restores the ability to provide waxing and esthetics services to the cosmetology license. However, Ms. Cavone requests barbering and nails also be included to return to the complete list of allowable services by a licensed cosmetologist.

Nicole Zimmardo:

Ms. Cavone is a licensed cosmetologist in the state. HB 6666 restores the Ms. Zimmardo supports HB 6666 with the addition of barbering and nails be included to the list of allowable services by a licensed cosmetologist. The removal of barbering, esthetics, nails, and waxing from the license creates a financial hardship for her and her family. It is particularly unfair since her 1500 hours of cosmetology school trained and prepared her to offer those professional services. Additionally, until the 2019 change to the statute, she could provide them with her cosmetology license in the state for the entirety of her cosmetology career.

Jim Williams, Government Relations Director-CT, American Heart Association (AHA):

Mr. Williams and the AHA support Section 67 of HB 6666 to add thrombectomy-capable stroke centers to the list of allowable certified stroke center types. Thrombectomy-capable stroke centers are a necessary and valuable update to the statute.

Mr. Williams and the AHA worked with the State of Connecticut Stroke Advisory Committee (SOC SAC) to craft the language for Section 68 of this bill to create a statewide stroke registry. A statewide stroke registry would be the centralized location to collect and store data. This registry allows for trend monitoring and exploring possible care delivery challenges

due to unexplored disparities and inequities in the current system. However, the language written in Section 8 goes beyond the collectively agreed language and stated outcomes submitted to the Public Health Committee. The AHA requests a "strike all" amendment with the specific language in their submitted testimony or the opportunity to work with all interested parties to find consensual language. If neither option is feasible, they request the committee withdraw this section from the bill.

The Public Health Committee received several pieces of submitted testimony in support of HB 6666.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Assisted Living Association (CALA):

CALA has concerns about the language in lines 2137-2145 regarding managed residential communities (MRC). The language is vague, ambiguous, and can conflict with existing laws and regulations. Additionally, what appears to be a requirement for an assisted living services agency (ALSA) to receive approval to operate a memory care service center. They object to this requirement whether it be required prospectively or if they need to apply for approval of services they have been providing for many years.

Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA):

CHA opposes Section 66 of this bill as written due to the increase of civil penalties and lack of language, taking possible technical challenges into account that would inadvertently prevent a provider from reporting required information to the Department of Public Health (DPH).

They also oppose the language used in Section 68. As specified by third-party entities, the data collection requirements are limited to what is put into statute today. This language does not allow for developments leading to improvements in quality of care for stroke patients. The included civil penalties are an unwelcome and unnecessary mandate.

CHA requested two amendments to this bill. They would like language added to clarify when a registrar must require a marriage license applicant to appear in person at the registrar's office to receive a marriage license and when they can provide accommodations to people unable to appear in person due to medical reasons. They would also like electronic discharge planning records to be allowable, given the increased use of electronic health records. Currently, only paper records are allowed.

Hartford HealthCare (HHC):

HHC requests clarification on the language in Section 66 as it changes the acceptable transmission types for reportable disease types from mail and phone to a DPH managed online portal system. It also levies a significant fine if there is a failure to report. However, the system DPH uses does not accept all types of reports via their portal system and some reports must be faxed. HHC specifically wants to know if faxing is an acceptable transmission type to meet the electronic reporting requirement.

Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut:

Ms. Morelli and LeadingAge Connecticut do not support Sections 53, 54, and 66 of this HB 6666. Section 53 is concerning as it requires a managed residential community (MRC) that

wants to provide assisted living services to become an assisted living services agency (ALSA). Currently, MRCs may contract with outside ALSAs to provide these services and are supported by other language in the related subsection.

Section 54 appears to be codifying a Commissioner's Order requiring beds be separated by 6 feet instead of the 3 feet as written in the statute in response to social distancing requirements set forth by the CDC. LeadingAge Connecticut requests that a specific distance not be written into the bill. Section 66 requires a civil penalty for certain health care providers who fail to report certain diseases to DPH. They request clarity if that would also apply to the licensed institutions that employ the health care providers as they are already required to make these reports.

Hannah Bandy, Connecticut Association of Professional Tattooers (CAPT):

Ms. Bandy and the CAPT do not support removing the language surrounding tattoo technicians in HB 6666. Tattoo professionals support requiring a licensed tattoo technician to have a minimum of five years experience before being considered a mentor and taking on the responsibility of an apprentice. Additionally, they want a limit of one apprentice per mentor and two total apprentices per shop with a minimum of 2000 teaching hours per apprentice before licensure.

Kelly Green, Connecticut Association of Professional Tattooers (CAPT):

Ms. Green and the CAPT have been working with the Department of Public Health (DPH) for the past three years to standardize and professionalize licensing requirements for a licensed tattoo technician in the state. They want standards for the definition of a mentor, the number of apprentices allowed per mentor, and a required number of work experience hours per apprenticeship. Ms. Green and her organization request this language be returned to HB 6666 to achieve these professional standardization goals.

Reported by: Kate Hamilton

May 18, 2021