
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 457

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CONNECTICUT'S IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION SYSTEM.

SUMMARY

This bill replaces the Department of Public Health's (DPH) childhood immunization registry and tracking system ("CIRTS") with an immunization information system ("CT WiZ") that provides vaccine recipients of all ages, instead of only children under age 6, with access to their immunization records.

The bill requires, rather than allows, DPH to maintain the system and requires the system to include information to accurately identify a vaccine recipient and assess the recipient's current immunization status.

Under the bill, vaccine recipients' participation in CT WiZ is voluntary, and health care providers must provide a vaccine recipient, or the recipient's legal guardian, conservator, or parent or guardian (if a minor) (hereafter "recipient's representative"), information on how to opt out of enrolling in the system.

As under current law, all personal information in CT WiZ is confidential and cannot be disclosed without the consent of the vaccine recipient or the recipient's representative.

Under the bill, healthcare providers:

1. must order vaccines through CT WiZ when administering vaccines to children under the Connecticut Vaccine Program (see BACKGROUND);
2. must report to DPH certain information regarding the vaccine administration when they administer vaccines to residents; and

3. may use CT WiZ to access a person's current immunization status to (a) determine whether the person requires immunizations or (b) officially document the person's immunization status to meet childcare, school, or higher education immunization entry requirements.

The bill also imposes various requirements on CT WiZ and authorizes DPH to take specified actions, as follows:

1. DPH must, upon request, provide a vaccine recipient, or the recipient's representative, access to any information a health care provider gives to CT WiZ on the recipient's vaccine status;
2. DPH must, in consultation with the Office of Health Strategy (OHS), facilitate interoperability between CT WiZ and the Statewide Health Information Exchange;
3. DPH must provide local and district health directors with sufficient information on residents who live in their jurisdiction and are listed in CT WiZ in order to address under-vaccinated communities and improve health equity;
4. the DPH commissioner may use information in CT WiZ for medical or scientific research, disease control and prevention, and maintaining the state's list of reportable diseases, emergency illnesses and health conditions, and lab findings (see BACKGROUND); and
5. DPH may exchange information in CT WiZ with federal agencies providing health care services and other states' immunization information systems.

The bill also makes various related technical and conforming changes, including repealing a provision requiring DPH to provide COVID-19 vaccine recipients information on their vaccination status.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2022

HEALTH CARE PROVIDER DEFINITION

Under the bill, a health care provider is someone who:

1. is a physician, physician assistant, nurse midwife, advanced practice registered nurse, registered nurse, pharmacist, or an individual authorized by state or federal law to administer a vaccine and
2. has direct or supervisory responsibility for administering a vaccine or assessing a person's immunization status.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The bill requires each health care provider who administers a vaccine to a resident to report, in a manner the DPH commissioner prescribes, the following information:

1. the vaccine recipient's name and date of birth;
2. the name and date of each vaccine dose administered to the recipient;
3. any other information the commissioner deems necessary; and
4. when appropriate, contraindications or exemptions to administering each vaccine dose.

INTEROPERABILITY WITH THE STATEWIDE HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The bill requires the DPH commissioner, in consultation with the Office of Health Strategy, to facilitate interoperability between the immunization information system and the Statewide Health Information Exchange. It allows the commissioner to implement necessary policies and procedures while in the process of adopting regulations, provided she posts the policies and procedures on the eRegulations System before adopting them. The policies and procedures she implements are valid until the regulations are adopted.

BACKGROUND

Connecticut Vaccine Program

The Connecticut Vaccine Program is a state and federally funded

program that provides certain childhood vaccinations at no cost to health care providers. The state-funded component is funded by an assessment on certain health insurers and third-party administrators.

DPH List of Reportable Diseases

By law, DPH must annually issue a list of (1) reportable diseases, emergency illnesses, and health conditions and (2) reportable laboratory findings. Health care providers and clinical laboratories must report findings of the diseases, illnesses, and conditions identified on this list within 12 hours and 48 hours, respectively.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 22 Nay 9 (03/23/2022)