
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6729 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE MEMBERSHIP OF VARIOUS ADVISORY BOARDS AND COUNCILS.

SUMMARY

By law, "state-operated facilities" are hospitals and facilities that the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) operates in whole or part that provide treatment for people with psychiatric disabilities, substance use disorders, or both (CGS § 17a-458) (see BACKGROUND).

This bill requires, rather than allows, all state-operated facilities to have an advisory board. Under current law, facilities with advisory boards must have their superintendent or director make member appointments. The bill requires these appointing authorities to appoint at least two members with lived experience with behavioral health disorders to their respective boards.

The bill also eliminates the advisory board to the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC), a community mental health center that DMHAS operates in collaboration with the Yale Department of Psychiatry. Under current law, CMHC is not allowed to have a superintendent- or director-appointed advisory board and instead has a nine-member CMHC Advisory Board that the DMHAS commissioner appoints. Of these appointments, two each must be nominated by the Yale-New Haven Health System and Yale University. The bill instead subjects the center to its advisory board requirements for all other state-operated facilities.

The bill also (1) expands the existing Connecticut Valley Hospital Advisory Council from 13 to 15 members and (2) requires it to include, on and after January 1, 2024, at least two members appointed by the

DMHAS commissioner with lived experience with behavioral health disorders. Under current law, the DMHAS commissioner appoints six members of the council; the bill correspondingly increases her number of appointments to eight. Existing law, unchanged by the bill, requires the council to advise DMHAS on topics such as building use, security, and clients residing at the facility and their discharge.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

*House Amendment "A" (1) specifies that at least two members of state-operated facilities' advisory boards must be people with lived experience with behavioral health disorders and (2) increases the Connecticut Valley Hospital Advisory Council's membership.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the advisory board requirements for state-operated facilities are effective October 1, 2023.

BACKGROUND

State-Operated Facilities and Advisory Boards

By law, state-operated facilities generally include, but are not limited to, the Capitol Region Mental Health Center, the Connecticut Valley Hospital (including its Addictions and General Psychiatric divisions), the Whiting Forensic Hospital, the Connecticut Mental Health Center, the Franklin S. DuBois Center, the Greater Bridgeport Community Mental Health Center, and River Valley Services (CGS § 17a-458).

An advisory board is required to (1) periodically meet with the facility superintendent or director to advise on the facility's programs and policies; (2) act as a liaison between the facility and residents of its assigned geographic area; and (3) issue reports to the governor and DMHAS commissioner on facility conditions and recommendations for changes or improvements (CGS § 17a-471).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 0 (03/20/2023)

