

# Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6645

AN ACT REQUIRING PARENTAL NOTIFICATION OF CERTAIN EVENTS BY  
INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT

**Title:** FACILITIES SERVING CHILDREN.

**Vote Date:** 2/24/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/16/2023

**File No.:**

***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:**

Committee on Children.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill (HB-6645) gives greater notification for parents who have kids staying at inpatient psychiatric and behavior health facilities. This bill aims to alert parents when certain events have taken place within the facility. This "event" can include any circumstance or development that has or may potentially have a detrimental impact on the safety, health, and wellness of the child receiving treatment. These detrimental events that can cause these impacts include, punitive action by DCF, suicide by a child that was in care of the facility, or the arresting of an employee of said facility whose had contact with multiple children. This notification to parents gives greater transparency to those within this system and allows greater ease of stress that the parents or guardians may feel while their child is in facility.

The notification by electronic-mail or telephone of the parents or guardians by the previously laid out occurrence of an "event" must happen no later than 24 hours after the event occurs. And no later than 7 days should the parents or guardians be notified by mailing. This alert gives parents a quick and easy ability to understand and know what is happening within the facility and have a better feeling that their child is in a safe and secure facility and system.

This bill grants greater transparency and builds trust between inpatient facilities and the parents and guardians.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

Acting Child Advocate of the Office of the Child Advocate, Sarah Healy Eagan, supports this bill and its purpose of requiring notification to both parents and guardians regarding certain events such as abuse or neglect while in an inpatient treatment facility. OCA also recommends the following:

1. Amend state law to allow DCF and DDS to provide findings of oversight failure in difference to that of a sole perpetrator. This allows DCF more dynamic ability to address conditions of the child.
2. Require DCF to share with both parents and child victims the results of an investigation whether it substantiated or not.
3. Require follow up by an authority either licenser or regulatory whenever a program has been identified as problematic.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

Public Policy and Affiliates Relations Manager, NAMI Connecticut, Thomas Burr, supports this bill and its ability to provide notice to parents in a case of certain events that were outlined in said bill.

Senior Public Policy Advisor, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance, Jeff Shaw would like to give recommendations to the bill as follows:

1. The language definition of "notice event" that is used in the bill is a low threshold, they add that investigations are often routine and come up negative, they suggest that the threshold used for "event" be more precise, they recommend using for example, "immediate jeopardy" as a better standard.
2. The language definition of "arrest of an employee of such a facility" featured in the bill is recommended to be a low standard and suggests using "conviction" as a higher threshold.
3. The language definition of "facility" as used in the bill is far too broad and does not make it clear what facilities are being covered by the bill.
4. The short report timeline may also be in issue with DCF requirement that facilities cannot conduct internal investigations until DCF conducts or decides one is not need.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Christian Talarski**

**Date: 3/7/23**