
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5291

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING IMPROVED OPIOID MONITORING.

SUMMARY

This bill requires hospitals that treat a patient for a nonfatal opioid drug overdose to administer a toxicology screening if it is medically appropriate and the patient consents to it. At a minimum, the screening must test for opiates, opioids, benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, methadone, cocaine, gabapentin, xylazine, and other substances the Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner deems appropriate. Hospitals must perform the toxicology screenings for a three-and-a-half-year period, from January 1, 2025, to August 1, 2028, and report the screening results to DPH as the commissioner prescribes.

Additionally, the bill requires the DPH commissioner, by January 1, 2026, and annually afterwards until January 1, 2029, to report to the Public Health Committee on the toxicology screening results they receive. The report must (1) identify and analyze any trends, (2) identify any benefits patients experienced when seeking emergency department care for their overdose, and (3) recommend whether hospitals should continue toxicology screening reporting after August 31, 2028.

Under the bill, the toxicology screening results hospitals report to DPH generally (1) are confidential and not subject to disclosure, (2) are not admissible as evidence in any court or agency proceeding, and (3) must be used solely for medical or scientific research or disease control or prevention purposes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

BACKGROUND

Reporting Opioid Drug Overdoses

By law, any hospital or emergency medical services (EMS) personnel that treat a patient for an opioid overdose must report the overdose to DPH. The department must then provide the data to the municipal or district health department that has jurisdiction over the overdose location, or, if that location is unknown, the location in which the hospital or EMS personnel treated the patient, as DPH in its discretion deems necessary to develop preventive initiatives.

In addition, the law requires hospitals that treat patients for nonfatal opioid drug overdoses to administer mental health screenings or patient assessments if it is medically appropriate to do so (CGS § 19a-127q).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 0 (03/11/2024)