



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services



## Legislative Update # 19

May 11, 2015

The legislative work has shifted from committees to action on the floor of the House and Senate. House and Senate sessions are scheduled almost daily at this point. There are a number of bills of interest to the behavioral health community that are sitting on the House and Senate Calendars awaiting action. In addition, the budget talks between the executive and legislative branch will begin as they work to reach an agreement on the budget for the next biennium. This update will flag the status of bills of interest and also alert you to any concerns regarding possible amendments.

**SB 16 AN ACT CONCERNING BENEFITS PAYABLE FOR ASSESSMENTS TO DETERMINE A DIAGNOSIS OF A MENTAL OR NERVOUS CONDITION AND RELATED CONSULTATIONS.** This bill expands coverage under certain health insurance policies for the assessment and diagnosis of mental or nervous conditions by prohibiting insurers from limiting the number of visits to assess an insured for such a diagnosis. **The bill is on Senate Floor awaiting action.**

**SB 18 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY HOARDING** The bill establishes a task force to study issues concerning hoarding. The task force shall (1) review current methods used by various public agencies to address hoarding, (2) identify barriers faced by public agencies to intervene and assist persons who compulsively hoard, and (3) create a framework to coordinate the efforts among state and local public agencies to address the public safety and health issues associated with hoarding. DMHAS will be a member of the task force. **The bill passed in the Senate and is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**SB 386 AN ACT CONCERNING ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR.** This bill makes several unrelated changes to the Liquor Control Act one of which is the banning of powdered alcohol. **The bill passed in the Senate and is on its way to the House for further action.**

**SB 841 AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE CHILDREN'S MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN.** This bill establishes a 34-member Children's Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board. The board must advise agencies (the bill does not specify which ones); child and family mental, emotional, and behavioral health service providers; advocates; and others interested in Connecticut child and family well-being. DMHAS would serve on this Board. **The bill passed in the Senate and is on its way to the House for further action.**

**SB 888 AN ACT CONCERNING ADEQUATE AND SAFE HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY AND YOUNGER PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.** The bill requires the Commissioner of Housing, in consultation with the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Department on Aging, the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Rehabilitation

Services and the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, to conduct a study of public housing in the state that houses both elderly tenants and younger tenants with disabilities and all the relevant issues associated with such housing. **The bill is on the Senate floor awaiting action.**

**SB 952 AN ACT CONCERNING A SECOND CHANCE SOCIETY.** The bill makes various changes to statutes regarding drug possession and results in a savings to the Department of Correction (DOC) of \$6.6 million in FY 16 and up to \$12.4 million in FY 17 through reduction in prison population and corresponding facility closures. **The bill is on the Senate floor awaiting action.**

**SB 1015 AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.** This bill requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to develop and administer a jail diversion program for veterans with trauma-related symptoms. The program's purpose is to divert or refer such veterans from the criminal justice system into treatment and recovery services. The program must (1) be modeled after the New London Judicial District's Veterans' Jail Diversion Program and (2) include a DMHAS representative specializing in veterans' jail diversion in each of the state's geographical area court facilities. **The bill is on the Senate floor awaiting action**

**SB1064 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PALLIATIVE USE OF MARIJUANA.** This bill makes various changes to the state's medical marijuana program, which the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) administers. The bill is on the Senate floor awaiting action.

**SB 1085 AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MENTAL OR NERVOUS CONDITIONS.** This bill expands the services certain health insurance policies must cover for mental and nervous conditions (see BACKGROUND). By law, a policy must cover the diagnosis of and treatment for mental or nervous conditions on the same basis as for medical, surgical, or other physical conditions (i.e., parity). **The bill is on the Senate floor awaiting action.**

**SB 1089 AN ACT CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.** This bill makes various changes regarding behavioral health services. **The bill has been referred to the Appropriations Committee.**

**SB1090 AN ACT CONCERNING GAMING.** This bill authorizes off-reservation casino gaming at up to three unspecified locations in Connecticut, subject to regulation by the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP), which regulates all gambling in the state, except gambling at the state's two casinos. Under the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegans currently operate the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos, respectively, on their reservations. **The bill is on the Senate floor awaiting action.**

**SB 1130 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING A TAX ON CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES AND FUNDING REGIONAL OPIOID ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS.** This bill creates a mechanism to fund opioid abuse and prevention programs in the state's five mental health regions. The mechanism (1) imposes a 6.35% tax on the gross receipts of the legal sale of

schedule I and II controlled substances and (2) dedicates the revenue the tax generates toward funding these programs. This tax does not exempt anyone from paying the tax imposed on controlled substances and marijuana that are illegally acquired, transported, or imported into Connecticut (CGS § 12-651).

**The bill is on the Senate floor awaiting action.**

**HB 6276 AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING IN YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION.** This bill requires the Department of Children and Families' Youth Suicide Advisory Board to offer a youth suicide prevention training course at least quarterly. The course must be open to anyone, free of charge.

**The bill is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**HB 6483 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY GROUP HOME DISTRIBUTION.** The bill establishes a task force to study the distribution of group homes throughout the state. DMHAS is represented on the task force. **The bill is on the House floor awaiting action**

**\*There are a number of amendments filed on this bill to take away the zoning protections DMHAS has in statute for group home siting.**

**HB 6708 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION STATUTES.** This bill makes several changes in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) statutes. **The bill is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**HB 6759 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LANDLORDS AND TENANTS REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF BED BUG INFESTATIONS.** This bill establishes a framework for identifying and treating bed bug infestations in residential rental properties, including public housing. It sets separate duties and responsibilities for landlords and tenants, including notice, inspection, and treatment requirements. It also gives landlords and tenants remedies when either party fails to comply with these duties and responsibilities. **The bill is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**HB 6824 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE.** This is the budget bill. **The bill is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**HB 6856 AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND OPIOID OVERDOSE PREVENTION.** This bill makes various changes affecting prescription drugs, drug abuse prevention, and related topics. Among other things, it: (1) requires practitioners, before prescribing greater than a 72-hour supply of any controlled substance, to check the patient's record in the prescription drug monitoring program; (2) requires practitioners to review the patient's record at least every 90 days if prescribing for prolonged treatment; (3) starting in July 2016, requires pharmacists to immediately report to the monitoring program on prescriptions they fill, rather than at least weekly, and requires the reporting to be done electronically; (4) makes other changes to the prescription drug monitoring program, including exempting opioid agonists in certain situations; (5) allows pharmacists to prescribe opioid antagonists, used to treat drug overdoses, if they receive special training and certification to do

so, and expands the existing immunity for all prescribers when prescribing, dispensing, or administering opioid antagonists; (6) requires physicians, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), dentists, and physician assistants (PAs) to take continuing education in prescribing controlled substances and pain management; and (7) makes changes to membership and other matters concerning the Connecticut Alcohol and Drug Policy Council. **The bill is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**HB 6862 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE PALLIATIVE USE OF MARIJUANA FOR CHILDREN.** The bill requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) in consultation with the Department of Consumer Protection to study the palliative use of marijuana for children and report to the General Assembly. **The bill is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**HB 6909 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY ADVISORY BOARD.** This bill establishes in statute a 26-member Connecticut Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board to address the needs of those with traumatic brain injuries (TBI). (In practice, a TBI advisory board already exists informally within the Department of Social Services (DSS)). The board must make recommendations for implementing a state-wide plan to address these needs and report annually to the governor and the Human Services and Public Health committees. **The bill is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**HB 6976 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS** The bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to conduct a study of recovery high school programs for students recovering from substance abuse or dependence. **There is an amendment to add DMHAS to the study. The bill is on the floor of the House awaiting action.**

**HB 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO CERTAIN CRIMINAL STATUTES.** The bill requires the Department of Correction and the Office of Policy and Management's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division to report on certain data related to risk reduction credits and makes other changes to the criminal statutes. **This bill has been identified for DMHAS' language regarding changes to the Psychiatric Security Review Board statutes. The bill is on the House floor awaiting action.**

**Accessing Information via the Connecticut General Assembly Web Page:**

If you wish to get the details/status on a bill, read the text of a bill, or check on committee agendas or upcoming events in the Bulletin, log onto the Connecticut General Assembly web page at: <http://www.cga.ct.gov>

The CGA schedule of events can be accessed on that same page by scrolling down and clicking on the appropriate item.