



STATE OF CONNECTICUT Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services



Legislative Update # 2

January 14, 2015

Session has started and committees have had their organizational meetings. The committee will begin to raise bills in the next few weeks and we will keep you apprised of the bills that are before them and raised for public hearing. The Governor's budget address has been pushed back to February 18th. This means that the budget public hearings will be pushed back as well. The budget hearings will be held from Tuesday February 24th to Friday February 27th and from Tuesday March 3rd to Friday March 5th. We do not know when the DMHAS budget hearing will be scheduled within that time-frame. I would hazard a guess that a Thursday or Friday evening is most likely.

The DMHAS legislative package includes the following proposals:

An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Mental Health and Addiction Statutes

The proposal would make 3 changes to DMHAS statutes:

- 1) Continue to allow DMHAS to collect data from mental health and substance abuse providers for block grant and funding purposes
- 2) Gives the Commissioner the authority to designate someone other than her/himself to sign contracts
- 3) Eliminates the deputy commissioner and medical director statutes which are over prescriptive and the commissioner already has the statutory authority to fill these positions.

An Act Concerning the Pretrial Drug Education Program

The proposal makes a very technical change to the pretrial drug education program statute (changes "weeks" to "sessions") which allows individuals to attend the programs twice a week as opposed to once a week for 15 weeks.

An Act Concerning Management of Individuals Committed to the Psychiatric Security Review Board

The proposal clarifies the definition of a "Conditional release"; defines psychiatric disability to be consistent with 53a-13(c); allows DOC to monitor an acquittee who is released under a "conditional release"; allows an acquittee who is charged with a criminal offense while in the custody of DMHAS in an inpatient setting to be placed in the custody of the Commissioner of DOC on bond if appropriate.

In addition, we believe there will be proposals to address the opioid epidemic in our communities.

This legislative session may look to take away many of the gains the behavioral health community has made in recent years. I expect activity to focus on:

- protecting statutory protections for the siting of residential facilities
- protecting our right to live in senior disabled housing
- protecting civil liberties and
- protecting the DMHAS budget and currently funded programs.

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>

If you wish to look up committee agendas or check upcoming events in the Bulletin, these can be accessed on that same page by scrolling down and clicking on the appropriate item.