



SENATE OF PENNSYLVANIA BILL SUMMARY

Senate Bill 917 Printer's No. 1096

Prime Sponsor: Senator Browne
Committee: Judiciary

SYNOPSIS:

This bill amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) to facilitate the sharing of information among agencies that are involved with child welfare and delinquency cases or the identification of children at risk of abuse or neglect.

SUMMARY:

Subject to the confidentiality provisions of specified federal and state laws, this bill requires that, upon request, the contents of records in the possession of a county Children & Youth agency relating to drug and alcohol treatment, mental health, and education shall be provided to the court or juvenile probation department. The bill pertains only to the records of a child who is:

- Subject to an open child protective services or general protective services investigation
- Alleged or found to be dependent
- Has been accepted for service by the county Children & Youth agency
- Has been placed under supervision under an informal adjustment or consent decree
- Has been found to have committed a delinquent act

The Children & Youth agency, court, or juvenile probation department must use the information contained in the records in furtherance of a delinquency or dependency disposition. As long as there is no confidential information disclosed, the information may be used in furtherance of efforts to identify and provide services to children who are determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or additional delinquent behavior. The information may be shared with other agencies or entities if there is a specific need to do so, but must be done pursuant to an information-sharing agreement.

The bill provides that information-sharing agreements may be developed among Children & Youth agencies, local law enforcement agencies, mental health agencies, drug and alcohol agencies, school districts, and other agencies and entities as deemed appropriate. The agreements are subject to the specified confidentiality laws and approval of the court. The purpose of the information-sharing agreement is to enhance the coordination of case management services. The preferred method for obtaining authorization to share confidential information is by the written informed consent of the person authorized to consent to release of information. Information-sharing agreements must list the specific activities in which the signatories will engage and prohibit the release of information with other parties.

Effective Date: This bill is effective in 60 days.

BILL HISTORY:

There is no bill history during this legislative session.

Prepared by: Cawley 11/16/2015