

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. House Bill 478

PRINTER NO. 2699

AMOUNT

No Fiscal Impact

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

February 14, 2017

PRIME SPONSOR

Representative Pickett

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF BILL

House Bill 478 establishes the Outpatient Psychiatric Oversight Act which specifies the number of hours that a psychiatrist or other advanced practice professional is required to be onsite at an outpatient psychiatric clinic.

The bill provides that an outpatient psychiatric clinic must have a psychiatrist on site for two hours per week for each full-time equivalent treatment staff member.

In addition, the bill stipulates that 50 percent of the required on-site psychiatric time may be provided by an advanced practice professional or a psychiatrist off-site by the use of two-way, real-time interactive audio and video transmission using technology that conforms to industrywide compressed audio-video communication and protects confidentiality under Federal and State law in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department of Human Services. Telephone conversation, electronic mail message or facsimile transmission may not be used to meet the time requirement.

House Bill 478 also requires the Department of Human Services to promulgate necessary regulations and defines "advanced practice professional" as a person who:

- Holds a current Pennsylvania license as a certified registered nurse practitioner with a mental health certification or obtains a mental health certification within two years of being hired by a psychiatric outpatient clinic or within two years of the effective date of this section, whichever is later; or
- Holds a current Pennsylvania license as a physician assistant with a mental health certification or obtains a mental health certification within two years of being hired by a psychiatric outpatient clinic or within two years of the effective date of this section, whichever is later.

House Bill 478 defines "full-time equivalent" as thirty-seven and one-half hours per week and defines "outpatient psychiatric clinic" as a nonresidential treatment setting in which psychiatric, psychological, social, educational and other related services are provided under medical supervision. It is designed for the evaluation and treatment of individuals of any age with mental illness or emotional distress. Outpatient services are provided on a planned and regularly scheduled basis.

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The bill defines "psychiatrist" as a physician who has completed at least three years of a residency in psychiatry and is licensed to practice psychiatry in Pennsylvania.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 478 will have no fiscal impact to the Commonwealth. The bill requires the Department of Human Services to promulgate regulations, which can be accomplished within existing staffing levels and funding provided to the department.