

## Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

### CS/HB 1269 — Child Protection

by Health Quality Subcommittee and Rep. Harrell (CS/SBs 1318 and 1454 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senators Garcia and Broxson)

CS/HB 1269 makes a number of changes to provisions relating to child protection teams (CPT). A CPT is a medically directed, multidisciplinary team in the Department of Health (DOH) that supplements the child protective investigation efforts of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and local sheriffs' offices in cases of child abuse and neglect. CPTs provide expertise in evaluating alleged child abuse and neglect, assess risk and protective factors, and provide recommendations for interventions.

The bill:

- Allows a board-certified physician in family medicine to be hired as a CPT medical director. Physicians employed as CPT medical directors must, within two years after their date of employment, obtain either a subspecialty certification in child abuse from the American Board of Pediatrics or meet the minimum requirements established by a third-party credentialing entity recognizing a demonstrated specialized competence in child abuse pediatrics pursuant to s. 39.303(2)(d), F.S.
- Requires the State Surgeon General and Deputy Secretary for Children's Medical Services to consult with the Statewide Medical Director for Child Protection on decisions regarding screening, employment, and termination of child protection team medical directors at headquarters and within all circuits statewide.
- Revises the group of persons authorized to complete the required review of all suspected abuse and neglect reports submitted to the DCF Florida Abuse Hotline, to determine if a face-to-face medical evaluation by a child protection team is necessary.
- Changes CPT districts to circuits to align the CPT and the DCF service areas.
- Codifies the requirements for Sexual Abuse Treatment Programs that provide children alleged to have been sexually abused, their siblings, and their non-offending caretakers with specialized therapeutic treatment to assist in recovery from sexual abuse.
- Requires Children's Medical Services to convene a task force to develop a standardized protocol for forensic interviewing for children suspected of having been abused and to provide staff to support the task force, as needed. The task force must include various representatives from the disciplines of law enforcement, child welfare, and mental health treatment. The DOH must provide the protocol to the Legislature by January 1, 2018.
- Expands the cases in which an expert witness certificate may be used, to include cases involving abandonment, dependency, and sexual abuse.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2017.

*Vote: Senate 37-0; House 118-0*