

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/HB 47 — Specific Medical Diagnoses in Child Protective Investigations

by Health & Human Services Committee; Human Services Subcommittee; and Reps. Bartleman, Maney, and others (CS/CS/SB 42 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; and Senators Sharief, Rouson, Grall, Bernard, and Garcia)

The bill amends statutes related to child protective investigations to allow for the consideration of certain preexisting medical diagnoses for a child who has been removed from his or her home by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) due to allegations of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Specifically, the bill:

- Authorizes the DCF to delay forwarding allegations of criminal conduct to law enforcement pending the outcome of the child protective investigation if the parent or legal custodian alleges the child has a preexisting condition of Rickets, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, Osteogenesis imperfecta, or Vitamin D deficiency or has requested a second medical examination of the child to determine whether the child may have one of those preexisting conditions. The bill requires allegations of criminal conduct that may remain upon completion of the investigation to be immediately forwarded to law enforcement.
- Requires the DCF, upon commencement of a child protective investigation, to notify parents or legal custodians of their duty to report preexisting medical diagnoses and the contact information of the healthcare professional that diagnosed or treated the child within 10 days after being informed of the duty to report. The bill also amends the procedures of a child protective investigation to require the DCF to request relevant medical records from the diagnosing or treating healthcare professional of the child.
- Requires a Child Protection Team (CPT), when evaluating a child with a listed reported preexisting condition, to consult with a licensed physician or licensed advanced practice registered nurse with experience in treating children with that reported medical diagnosis. The bill allows a parent or legal custodian from whom the child has been removed to request a second medical examination or the consideration of a differential diagnosis after an initial allegation. The bill requires the parent or legal custodian to request such examination within 10 days of the initial examination and to bear the cost of the examination.
- Requires the health care practitioner who performs the second medical examination to submit a written report to the DCF and the parent or legal custodian within 10 days of the examination with their findings and conclusions. If the second examination conflicts with the initial examination, the bill requires the DCF to convene a case staffing to reach a consensus.
- Establishes a 14-day time limit in which a health care practitioner must furnish patient records to the DCF after receiving a records request from the DCF.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 34-0; House 109-0

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Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

HB 491 — Faith-based Content in Batterers' Intervention Programs

by Reps. Blanco, Johnson, and others (SB 624 by Senators Yarborough and Harrell)

The bill authorizes Batterers' Intervention Programs to offer supplemental faith-based activities as part of program offerings, while explicitly prohibiting programs from requiring participation in such activities as a condition of program participation.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 33-1; House 107-2

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/HB 565 — Agency for Persons with Disabilities

by Health & Human Services Committee; Human Services Subcommittee; and Reps. Tant, Weinberger, and others (CS/CS/SB 794 by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senators Jones and Garcia)

The bill amends s. 393.063, F.S., to expand the number of individuals who may receive disability-related services from the State. Specifically, the bill defines Tatton-Brown-Rahman syndrome (TBRS) and adds it to the list of conditions included within the definition of “developmental disability,” thereby qualifying someone diagnosed with TBRS to receive services from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD).

The bill amends s. 393.0655, F.S., to expand who is required to be Level 2 background screened in licensed residential facilities and adult day training programs. This change reIf approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.moves the specific reference to only managers and supervisors and instead requires Level 2 employment screening for all employees of these facilities and programs. As a result, the screening requirement is broadened to apply uniformly to all employees of these facilities and programs, regardless of job title or supervisory status.

Upon becoming law, the bill directs the APD to engage in several activities that are focused on improving the quality, consistency, and accountability of support coordination services statewide. Specifically, the bill directs the APD to contract with a state university to develop and administer surveys of owners and operators of qualified organizations for the purpose of evaluating the quality, capacity, and consistency of care coordination services. The state university must submit the report on the survey results and analysis to the APD by October 1, 2026. The bill also directs the APD to solicit input on enhancing waiver support coordinator services from relevant stakeholders, hold at least one public hearing for this purpose in each service region of the state, and conduct or contract for a gap analysis to assess the caseload capacity of support coordinators. Finally, the bill directs the APD to submit a report to the Governor and Legislature by February 15, 2027, identifying core competencies and performance measures for waiver support coordinators, recommending standardized assessment methods, and including the final survey report prepared by the contracted state university.

Except as otherwise provided, if approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 110-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

HB 569 — Forensic Client Services

by Reps. Chaney, Maney, and others (SB 778 by Senator Simon)

The bill amends the definition of “forensic client” to include individuals involuntarily committed to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) that have had their charges dismissed due to intellectual disability or autism.

Florida law requires the APD to house non-forensic clients and forensic clients separately in APD facilities, despite these populations often requiring the same level of need and care. The bill considers the following populations as forensic clients, effectively allowing the APD to house these populations in the same ward in an APD-operated, secure, state treatment facility:

- Felony defendants adjudicated incompetent to proceed in a criminal proceeding due to mental illness.
- Defendants found not guilty by reason of insanity.
- Felony defendants adjudicated incompetent to proceed due to intellectual disability or autism.
- Defendants that have had their charges dismissed due to their incompetency to proceed due to intellectual disability or autism.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 109-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/SB 578 — Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Initiative

by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Simon

The bill establishes a statewide Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Initiative to improve public education, outreach, and access to information for individuals affected by Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires the Department of Elderly Affairs (DOEA) to contract for the development and implementation of an Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Initiative. The initiative is intended to provide information and support to residents affected by Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias and promote awareness using information validated by national research.
- Requires the initiative to include a website and educational resources addressing topics such as early detection, brain health, risk reduction, research developments, and available community services. It must also incorporate the DOEA Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Resource Guide and promote health care provider education in partnership with the Department of Health.
- The bill requires public awareness activities, including advertising and a statewide mobile outreach program prioritizing underserved communities, and requires the DOEA to contract with a qualified statewide nonprofit organization to implement the initiative.
- The Alzheimer’s Disease Advisory Committee must annually evaluate the initiative and provide funding recommendations to the department and the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 112-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/HB 915 — Medical Assistance Eligibility for Working Individuals with Disabilities

by Human Services Subcommittee and Rep. Tant and others (CS/SB 1016 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Bradley)

The bill codifies the Working People with Disabilities Program (program) created by the 2019-2020 General Appropriations Act to enroll employed adults with developmental disabilities who are enrolled in an eligible Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver to have increased income and asset limits. This allows individuals to work while maintaining Medicaid eligibility.

The bill requires the DCF to provide written notice to eligible adults of the program upon enrollment in an HCBS waiver that concisely communicates the following:

- Automatic enrollment in the program;
- Eligibility and qualifications for the program;
- The ability to maintain Medicaid benefits while earning income;
- The optional nature of the program;
- An overview of a special needs trust and how it may assist with maintaining eligibility; and
- The name and contact information for an individual responsible for providing information on eligibility or other assistance.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

SB 1022 — Children’s Initiatives

by Senator Polsky

The bill creates the Bay County 32401 Children’s Initiative within Bay County and the Pompano RYZE (Resilient Youth with Zeal to Excel) Children’s Initiative within Broward County. Florida Children’s Initiatives are community-based service networks located in disadvantaged areas of the state that are created to improve the educational, economic, and health outcomes for residents in the area.

The bill requires both Children’s Initiatives to be managed by a not-for-profit corporation that complies with the requirements for not-for-profit corporations in ch. 617, F.S. The areas the Children’s Initiatives serve must be large enough to include all the necessary components of community life, yet small enough to serve all members of the community who wish to participate in the project.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/SB 1030 — Recovery Residences

by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senators Gruters and Rouson

The bill revises regulation and licensure of substance use disorder service providers regulated by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Specifically, the bill:

- Revises the definition of “transfer” in the licensure process to clarify that a transfer includes the transfer of a majority ownership interest or the transfer of responsibilities under a license to another entity.
- Requires a level 2 background screening on only the officers, directors, managing members, and individuals who exercise operational control of a service provider when there is a transfer of five percent or more of the controlling ownership interest of a licensed entity.
- Prohibits the DCF from requiring certain licensed providers to admit individuals during a probationary licensing period when expanding services if the provider has no outstanding violations or enforcement actions in the last 12 months.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 106-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/HB 1121 — Aging and Disability Services

by Human Services Subcommittee and Reps. Rizo, Basabe, and others (CS/SB 1630 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Grall)

The bill revises multiple statutes related to Florida’s aging and disability services under the Department of Elderly Affairs (DOEA) to modernize terminology, remove obsolete provisions, clarify service access pathways, and expand dementia-related infrastructure for elderly Floridians and adults with disabilities. Specifically, the bill amends chs. 409 and 430, F.S., to:

- Establish a pre-enrollment list process for long-term care managed care services and authorize Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) personnel to conduct screenings, manage placement, and administer rescreening.
- Require the Comprehensive Assessment and Review for Long-Term Care Services (CARES) program to review and perform the initial Long Term Care level-of-care assessment.
- Clarify that failure to efficiently manage program budgets may trigger corrective action by the DOEA.
- Create procurement and expenditure requirements for Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and a salary cap for an AAA chief executive officer or executive director at 150 percent of the DOEA Secretary’s salary when paid with state or federal funds.
- Revise Community Care for the Elderly program to allow an AAA to provide core services when the designated lead agency cannot perform its duties and require priority consideration for high-risk vulnerable adults referred through protective investigations.
- Update statutory references by redesignating “aging resource centers” as “aging and disability resource centers” and authorize ADRCs to manage placement on the pre-enrollment list and coordinate service referrals.
- Expand allowable Home Care for the Elderly subsidy payments to include food and nutritional supplements.

The bill also strengthens oversight of professional and public guardians. Specifically, the bill amends ch. 744, F.S., to:

- Require Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia training as part of continuing education for public and professional guardians.
- Authorize the Office of Public and Professional Guardians (OPPG) to impose fines and issue subpoenas during investigations.
- Expand confidentiality disclosure authority to allow clerks to provide certain confidential guardianship information to DOEA.
- Require DOEA to submit specified OPPG complaint records to legislative leadership by August 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 113-2

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Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/CS/SB 1690 — Child Care and Early Learning Services

by Appropriations Committee; Education Pre-K - 12 Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Calatayud

The bill makes several statutory changes relating to early childhood education and child care regulation and directs initiatives to enhance early childhood education.

In child care regulation, the bill:

- Amends “family *day care* home” to “family *child care* home” throughout Florida Statutes.
- Amends s. 402.306, F.S., to require the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and local licensing agencies to disseminate electronically certain information regarding all child care facilities rather than only those that are licensed. This includes information regarding licensing standards and procedures, health and safety standards for school readiness providers, monitoring and inspection reports, and annual data on child deaths, serious injuries, and substantiated abuse that have occurred in child care settings.
- Amends ss. 402.313 and 402.3131, F.S., to remove the annual requirements for family day care homes and large family child care homes to provide parents with information related to flu shots and leaving children in a vehicle unattended.
- Amends s. 402.316, F.S., to require certain exempt child care facilities, specifically those that are an integral part of a church or parochial school and those that are run by businesses for the benefit of their employees, to include a specified statement regarding their exemption from licensure or regulation by the DCF on their website, promotional materials and facility-created documents and forms provided to families.
- Amends s. 627.70161, F.S., to add “large family child care” as a type of child care services where the cancellation, denial, or nonrenewal of residential property insurance is prohibited solely on the basis that those services are provided at the residence.

In early childhood education, the bill:

- Amends s. 1001.24, F.S., to add “early learning programs for children from birth to five years of age” to the definition of the Department of Education (DOE) direct-support organization (DSO), authorizing the DOE’s DSO, the Florida Education Foundation, Inc., to receive, hold, invest, and administer property and to make expenditures to or for the benefit of early learning programs for children birth to five, in addition to current law allowing for public prekindergarten through grade 12.
- Creates s. 1002.821, F.S., to establish the Florida Child Care Fund within the DOE’s DSO to support early learning and child care needs of Florida families, and requires the Division of Early Learning to annually prepare and the DOE to publish on its website a report on the performance of the program and the program’s fundraising activities by January 1 of each year, beginning January 1, 2027.
- Amends s. 1002.95, F.S., to expand, subject to appropriation, the role of the TEACH Scholarship Program administrator to establish and administer the Center for Early Childhood Professional Recognition. There is currently no such professional recognition

entity for early childhood professionals designated or recognized in statute. In effect, the Center for Early Childhood Professional Recognition will ensure statewide alignment of training, trainer approval, and competency-based assessments for early learning professionals.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0