

Tab 1	SB 894 by Rodriguez ; Identical to H 00391 Faith-based Content in Batterers' Intervention Programs				
737012	D	S	CF, Rodriguez	Delete everything after	03/18 08:55 AM
Tab 2	SB 1240 by Calatayud ; Identical to H 01091 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Care				
856534	D	S	CF, Calatayud	Delete everything after	03/18 08:55 AM
Tab 3	SB 1286 by Grall ; Similar to H 01191 Harming or Neglecting Children				
Tab 4	SB 1736 by Grall ; Identical to H 01567 Insulin Administration by Direct-support Professionals and Relatives				
953948	A	S	CF, Grall	btw L.76 - 77:	03/18 08:56 AM

The Florida Senate
COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND ELDER AFFAIRS

Senator Grall, Chair
Senator Garcia, Vice Chair

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, March 19, 2025

TIME: 9:00—11:00 a.m.

PLACE: 301 Senate Building

MEMBERS: Senator Grall, Chair; Senator Garcia, Vice Chair; Senators Brodeur, Harrell, Rouson, Sharief, and Simon

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
1	SB 894 Rodriguez (Identical H 391)	Faith-based Content in Batterers' Intervention Programs; Specifying that batterers' intervention programs may include faith-based content; directing the Department of Children and Families to amend a specified rule to conform, etc. CF 03/19/2025 JU RC	
2	SB 1240 Calatayud (Identical H 1091)	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Care; Expanding mental health crisis services to include the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center; revising the definition of "crisis services" to include a 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center and defining the term "988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center"; requiring the Department of Children and Families to authorize and provide oversight of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call centers and adopt specified rules; removing requirements relating to providers of medication-assisted treatment services for opiate addiction, etc. CF 03/19/2025 AHS RC	
3	SB 1286 Grall (Similar H 1191)	Harming or Neglecting Children; Revising the definition of the term "harm" as it relates to a child's health or welfare; revising the definition of the term "neglect of a child", etc. CF 03/19/2025 ACJ RC	

COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA

Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 9:00—11:00 a.m.

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
4	SB 1736 Grall (Identical H 1567)	Insulin Administration by Direct-support Professionals and Relatives; Defining the term “direct-support professional”; authorizing direct-support professionals and relatives of clients in group home facilities for individuals with developmental disabilities to administer insulin as prescribed to the client if specified conditions are met, etc. CF 03/19/2025 AHS RC	

Other Related Meeting Documents

By Senator Rodriguez

40-01765-25

2025894__

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to faith-based content in batterers'
intervention programs; amending s. 741.325, F.S.;
specifying that batterers' intervention programs may
include faith-based content; directing the Department
of Children and Families to amend a specified rule to
conform; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of section
741.325, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

741.325 Requirements for batterers' intervention programs.—

(1) A batterers' intervention program must meet the
following requirements:

(d) The program content shall be based on a cognitive
behavioral therapy model or psychoeducational model that
addresses tactics of power and control by one person over
another. Program content may include faith-based components.

Section 2. The Department of Children and Families shall
repeal rule 65H-2.017(2)(e), Florida Administrative Code, to
conform to this act.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

BILL: SB 894

INTRODUCER: Senator Rodriguez

SUBJECT: Faith-based Content in Batterers' Intervention Programs

DATE: March 18, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Kennedy	Tuszynski	CF	Pre-meeting
2.			JU	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 894 expands the scope of batterers' intervention programs (BIPs) in Florida by allowing the inclusion of faith-based content alongside the existing cognitive behavioral therapy and psychoeducational models required by law. The bill also directs the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) to repeal a rule that currently prohibits faith-based ideology associated with a particular religion or denomination in these programs.

The bill likely does not have a fiscal impact on state government. See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill is effective July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

Batterers' Intervention Programs

A Batterers' Intervention Program (BIP) is designed to address and change the behavior of an individual who has committed acts of domestic violence. These programs aim to enhance accountability, reduce recidivism, and promote the safety of victims of Domestic Violence by educating participants on the impact of their actions and teaching them non-violent conflict resolution strategies. Unlike anger management programs, BIPs focus on power and control dynamics that fuel abusive behaviors.¹

If an individual is found guilty of, has adjudication withheld on, or pleads nolo contendere to a crime of domestic violence, the court must impose a minimum term of 1 year's probation and require the defendant to attend and complete a batterers' intervention program as a condition of

¹ See generally The Florida Department of Children and Families, *Media Guide for Professionals*, available at: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/abuse/domestic-violence/resources/media-guide-professionals> (last visited 3/6/2025).

probation.² The statute allows judicial discretion to waive this requirement if the court states on the record why a batterers' intervention program might be inappropriate.³ The Department of Children and Families currently allows BIP providers to include supplemental faith-based activities,⁴ however this faith-based content cannot be a mandatory part of program curriculum.⁵

State Law

In 1995, the Florida Legislature enacted requirements for Batterers' Intervention Programs, including a minimum duration of 29 weeks and a curriculum based on cognitive behavioral therapy models that focus on power and control dynamics in abusive relationships.⁶ The following year, the Legislature directed the DCF to oversee certification and compliance of BIPs to maintain program integrity and effectiveness.⁷ Unless deemed ineligible the intervention program condition must be imposed.⁸

In September of 2022, the DCF finalized a rule that created certification requirements for BIP.⁹ This rule specifically prohibits BIP curriculum from including faith-based ideology associated with a particular religion or denomination.¹⁰ Generally, BIP curricula must follow a cognitive behavioral therapy or psychoeducational model, addressing power and control dynamics and incorporate elements that include:¹¹

- The batterer taking responsibility for the violence.
- Viewing intimate partner violence as a learned behavior.
- Healthy expression of feelings.
- Communication and listening skills.
- Negotiation and conflict resolution.
- Not involving victim participation, fair fighting techniques, or faith-based ideology associated with a particular religion or denomination.

As of March 14, 2025, there were a total of 110 BIP programs available to circuit courts and individuals who require services.¹² Of these programs there are several who are faith-based, including the Salvation Army, Healing Hearts Ministry, Community Hands of Hope, and Free Spirit Evangelistic Outreach Ministries.¹³

² Section 741.281, F.S.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Florida Department of Children and Families, 2025 *Agency Analysis*, p.2 (on file with the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee).

⁵ Rule 65H-2, F.A.C.

⁶ Section 741.325, F.S.; Ch. 95-195, Laws of Fla.

⁷ Section 741.327, F.S.; Ch. 96-312, Laws of Fla.

⁸ Section 741.325, F.S.

⁹ Rule 65H-2.017, F.A.C.

¹⁰ Rule 65H-2.017(2)(e), F.A.C.

¹¹ *See generally* Rule 65H-2.017, F.A.C.

¹² The Florida Department of Children and Families, *Find a Local Batterers' Intervention Program*, available at: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/abuse/domestic-violence/resources/find-local-batterers-intervention-program> (last visited 3/14/25).

¹³ *Supra*, Note 4.

First Amendment Free Exercise Challenge

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution contain what is known as the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses. Together those clauses read:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .”¹⁴

This language has been interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United states to generally mean that the federal and state governments cannot create law that establishes the belief in a religion or prohibit citizens from exercising their religious beliefs freely.

The DCF recently defended a First Amendment challenge in federal court related to the current provision of Rule 65H-2.017, F.A.C., that prohibits BIP curriculum from including faith-based ideology associated with a particular religion or denomination.¹⁵ The court held that the DCF rule prohibiting “faith-based ideology associated with a particular religion or denomination” was government speech and not violitive of the free expression or exercise clause of the First Amendment and that “an observer of court-ordered BIP sessions would reasonably believe the government has endorsed the message expressed during that program.”¹⁶ This case is currently under appeal.¹⁷

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 894 amends s. 741.325, F.S., to allow Batterers' Intervention Programs (BIPs) to include faith-based components while maintaining the requirement that programs use cognitive behavioral therapy or psychoeducational models that address tactics of power and control.

The bill also directs the DCF to repeal rule 65H-2.017(2)(e) that prohibits faith-based ideology associated with a particular religion or denomination.

The bill provides for an effective date of July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

¹⁴ U.S. CONST. amend. I.

¹⁵ *Nussbaumer v. Harris*, United States District Court, Northern District of Fla., Case No. 4:22cv448-MW-MAF (November 15, 2024).

¹⁶ *Supra*, Note 4, p. 5.

¹⁷ *Nussbaumer v. Harris*, United States Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit, 2025 WL 692142 (February 26, 2025)

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

First Amendment Establishment Clause

Recently, in *Nussbaumer v. Harris*, United States District Court, Northern District of Fla., Tallahassee Division, Case No. 4:22cv448-MW/MAF (November 15, 2024) the DCF defended a First Amendment challenge to the current provisions of Rule 65H-2.017, F.A.C.

The court held that the Department rule prohibiting “faith-based ideology associated with a particular religion or denomination” was government speech and not violative of the free expression or exercise clause of the First Amendment. In *Nussbaumer*, the Court found that “an observer of court-ordered BIP sessions would reasonably believe the government has endorsed the message expressed during that program.”

Applying that same analysis to the bill language, it could be argued that a person ordered to BIP would reasonably attribute whatever faith-based components a provider is espousing to the state, raising a potential First Amendment Establishment Clause issue.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill amends s. 741.325 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.



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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs
(Rodriguez) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Present subsection (2) of section 741.325,
Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (3), and a new
subsection (2) is added to that section, to read:

741.325 Requirements for batterers' intervention programs.—
(2) A batterers' intervention program may offer
supplemental faith-based activities to participants.



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Participation in such activities may not be required as part of
the program.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete everything before the enacting clause
and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to faith-based activities in
batterers' intervention programs; amending s. 741.325,
F.S.; authorizing batterers' intervention programs to
offer supplemental faith-based activities; prohibiting
required participation in such activities; providing
an effective date.

By Senator Calatayud

38-00785A-25

20251240__

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to substance abuse and mental health care; amending s. 394.4573, F.S.; expanding mental health crisis services to include the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center; amending s. 394.67, F.S.; revising the definition of "crisis services" to include a 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center and defining the term "988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center"; creating s. 394.9088, F.S.; requiring the Department of Children and Families to authorize and provide oversight of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call centers and adopt specified rules; amending s. 397.427, F.S.; removing requirements relating to providers of medication-assisted treatment services for opiate addiction; amending s. 916.111, F.S.; revising training requirements for mental health professionals; amending s. 916.115, F.S.; requiring court appointed experts to have completed specified training and continued education; amending s. 916.12, F.S.; providing requirements for an expert to determine acceptable treatments available in a community; amending ss. 394.674 and 394.74, F.S.; conforming cross-references; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section 394.4573, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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30 394.4573 Coordinated system of care; annual assessment;
31 essential elements; measures of performance; system improvement
32 grants; reports.—On or before December 1 of each year, the
33 department shall submit to the Governor, the President of the
34 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives an
35 assessment of the behavioral health services in this state. The
36 assessment shall consider, at a minimum, the extent to which
37 designated receiving systems function as no-wrong-door models,
38 the availability of treatment and recovery services that use
39 recovery-oriented and peer-involved approaches, the availability
40 of less-restrictive services, and the use of evidence-informed
41 practices. The assessment shall also consider the availability
42 of and access to coordinated specialty care programs and
43 identify any gaps in the availability of and access to such
44 programs in the state. The department's assessment shall
45 consider, at a minimum, the needs assessments conducted by the
46 managing entities pursuant to s. 394.9082(5). The department
47 shall compile and include in the report all plans submitted by
48 managing entities pursuant to s. 394.9082(8) and the
49 department's evaluation of each plan.

50 (2) The essential elements of a coordinated system of care
51 include:

52 (d) Crisis services, including the 988 suicide and crisis
53 lifeline call center, mobile response teams, crisis
54 stabilization units, addiction receiving facilities, and
55 detoxification facilities.

56 Section 2. Subsections (1) through (25) of section 394.67,
57 Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (2) through
58 (26), respectively, subsection (4) is amended, and a new

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subsection (1) is added to that section, to read:

394.67 Definitions.—As used in this part, the term:

(1) “988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center” means a call center meeting national accreditation and recognized by the department to receive 988 calls, texts, or other forms of communication in this state.

(4) “Crisis services” means short-term evaluation, stabilization, and brief intervention services provided to a person who is experiencing an acute mental or emotional crisis, as defined in subsection (19) ~~(18)~~, or an acute substance abuse crisis, as defined in subsection (20) ~~(19)~~, to prevent further deterioration of the person’s mental health. Crisis services are provided in settings such as a crisis stabilization unit, an inpatient unit, a short-term residential treatment program, a detoxification facility, or an addictions receiving facility; at the site of the crisis by a mobile crisis response team; or at a hospital on an outpatient basis; or telephonically by a 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center.

Section 3. Section 394.9088, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

394.9088 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center.—

(1) The department shall authorize and provide oversight to 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call centers. Unless authorized by the department, call centers are not permitted to conduct 988 suicide and crisis lifeline services. The department may implement a corrective action plan, suspension or revocation of authorization for failure to comply with this section and rules adopted under this section.

(2) The department shall adopt rules relating to:

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88 (a) The process for authorization of 988 suicide and crisis
89 lifeline call centers.

90 (b) Minimum standards for 988 suicide and crisis lifeline
91 call centers to be authorized, including but not limited to,
92 service delivery, quality of care, and performance outcomes.

93 (c) The adequacy and consistency of 988 suicide and crisis
94 lifeline call centers' personnel certifications, accreditations,
95 quality assurance standards, and minimum training standards.

96 (d) Implementation of a cohesive statewide plan for 988
97 suicide and crisis lifeline call centers to achieve statewide
98 interoperability with the 911 system and to provide individuals
99 with rapid and direct access to the appropriate care.

100 Section 4. Subsections (3) through (9) of section 397.427,
101 Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (2) through (8),
102 respectively, and present subsections (2) and (5) are amended,
103 to read:

104 397.427 Medication-assisted treatment service providers;
105 rehabilitation program; needs assessment and provision of
106 services; persons authorized to issue takeout medication;
107 unlawful operation; penalty.—

108 ~~(2) The department shall determine the need for~~
109 ~~establishing providers of medication-assisted treatment services~~
110 ~~for opiate addiction.~~

111 ~~(a) Providers of medication-assisted treatment services for~~
112 ~~opiate addiction may be established only in response to the~~
113 ~~department's determination and publication of need for~~
114 ~~additional medication treatment services.~~

115 ~~(b) If needs assessment is required, the department shall~~
116 ~~annually conduct the assessment and publish a statement of~~

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findings which identifies each substate entity's need.

~~(c) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a) and (b), the license for medication-assisted treatment programs for opiate addiction licensed before October 1, 1990, may not be revoked solely because of the department's determination concerning the need for medication-assisted treatment services for opiate addiction.~~

~~(4)(5) The department shall also determine the need for establishing medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders other than opiate dependence.~~ Service providers within the publicly funded system shall be funded for provision of these services based on the availability of funds.

Section 5. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 916.111, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

916.111 Training of mental health experts.—The evaluation of defendants for competency to proceed or for sanity at the time of the commission of the offense shall be conducted in such a way as to ensure uniform application of the criteria enumerated in Rules 3.210 and 3.216, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure. The department shall develop, and may contract with accredited institutions:

(1) To provide:

(c) Training for mental health professionals in the application of these protocols and procedures in performing forensic evaluations and providing reports to the courts.
Training must include, but is not limited to, information on statutes and rules related to competency restoration, evidence-based practices, least restrictive treatment alternatives and placement options as described in s. 916.12(4)(c); and

Section 6. Subsection (1) of section 916.115, Florida

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Statutes, is amended to read:

916.115 Appointment of experts.—

(1) The court shall appoint no more than three experts to determine the mental condition of a defendant in a criminal case, including competency to proceed, insanity, involuntary placement, and treatment. The experts may evaluate the defendant in jail or in another appropriate local facility or in a facility of the Department of Corrections.

(a) The court ~~To the extent possible,~~ The appointed experts shall:

1. have completed forensic evaluator training approved by the department, and each shall Be a psychiatrist, licensed psychologist, or physician.

2. Have completed initial and ongoing forensic evaluator training, provided by the department.

3. If performing juvenile evaluations, complete annually, juvenile forensic competency evaluation training approved by the department.

(b) Existing evaluators shall complete department-provided continuing education training by July 1, 2026, to remain active on the list.

(c)-(b) The department shall maintain and annually provide the courts with a list of available mental health professionals who have completed the initial and annual approved training as experts.

Section 7. Paragraph (d) of subsection (4) of section 916.12, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

916.12 Mental competence to proceed.—

(4) If an expert finds that the defendant is incompetent to

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175 proceed, the expert shall report on any recommended treatment
176 for the defendant to attain competence to proceed. In
177 considering the issues relating to treatment, the examining
178 expert shall specifically report on:

179 (d) The availability of acceptable treatment and, if
180 treatment is available in the community, the expert shall so
181 state in the report. In determining what acceptable treatments
182 are available in the community, the expert shall, at a minimum,
183 use current information or resources on less restrictive
184 treatment alternatives, as described in paragraph (c) and those
185 obtained from training and continuing education approved by the
186 department.

187
188 The examining expert's report to the court shall include a full
189 and detailed explanation regarding why the alternative treatment
190 options referenced in the evaluation are insufficient to meet
191 the needs of the defendant.

192 Section 8. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section
193 394.674, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

194 394.674 Eligibility for publicly funded substance abuse and
195 mental health services; fee collection requirements.—

196 (1) To be eligible to receive substance abuse and mental
197 health services funded by the department, an individual must be
198 a member of at least one of the department's priority
199 populations approved by the Legislature. The priority
200 populations include:

201 (a) For adult mental health services:

202 1. Adults who have severe and persistent mental illness, as
203 designated by the department using criteria that include

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severity of diagnosis, duration of the mental illness, ability to independently perform activities of daily living, and receipt of disability income for a psychiatric condition. Included within this group are:

- a. Older adults in crisis.
- b. Older adults who are at risk of being placed in a more restrictive environment because of their mental illness.
- c. Persons deemed incompetent to proceed or not guilty by reason of insanity under chapter 916.
- d. Other persons involved in the criminal justice system.
- e. Persons diagnosed as having co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

2. Persons who are experiencing an acute mental or emotional crisis as defined in s. 394.67 ~~s. 394.67(18)~~.

Section 9. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 394.74, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.74 Contracts for provision of local substance abuse and mental health programs.—

(3) Contracts shall include, but are not limited to:

(a) A provision that, within the limits of available resources, substance abuse and mental health crisis services, as defined in s. 394.67 ~~s. 394.67(4)~~, shall be available to any individual residing or employed within the service area, regardless of ability to pay for such services, current or past health condition, or any other factor;

Section 10. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

BILL: SB 1240

INTRODUCER: Senator Calatayud

SUBJECT: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Care

DATE: March 18, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Kennedy	Tuszynski	CF	Pre-meeting
2.			AHS	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 1240 integrates the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Call Center into the state mental health crisis response network. The bill requires the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) to authorize, regulate, and oversee 988 call centers.

The bill removes the “needs assessment” requirement for licensure of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) programs for opioid addiction.

The bill establishes enhanced training standards for mental health professionals conducting forensic evaluations, emphasizing competency restoration, evidence-based practices, and placement alternatives to ensure consistent and effective forensic evaluations. The bill requires court-appointed mental health experts performing forensic evaluations to complete DCF-approved forensic training and ongoing education. The bill also requires mental health professionals to assess the availability of community-based treatment before recommending involuntary hospitalization.

The bill does not have a fiscal impact on state government or the private sector. See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

The present situation for each issue is described below in Section III, Effect of Proposed Changes.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1240 makes changes to Florida's mental health and substance abuse care systems of care by integrating crisis services, expanding treatment accessibility, and strengthening provider oversight. The bill improves response times for mental health emergencies, streamlines treatment, and enhances training for behavioral health professionals.

Background

Mental Health and Mental Illness

Mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community.¹ The primary indicators used to evaluate an individual's mental health are:²

- Emotional well-being- Perceived life satisfaction, happiness, cheerfulness, peacefulness;
- Psychological well-being- Self-acceptance, personal growth including openness to new experiences, optimism, hopefulness, purpose in life, control of one's environment, spirituality,
- Self-direction, and positive relationships; and
- Social well-being- Social acceptance, beliefs in the potential of people and society as a whole,
- Personal self-worth and usefulness to society, sense of community.

Mental illness is collectively all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress or impaired functioning.³ Thus, mental health refers to an individual's mental state of well-being whereas mental illness signifies an alteration of that well-being. Mental illness affects millions of people in the United States each year. Nearly one in five adults lives with a mental illness.⁴ During childhood and adolescence, almost half of children will experience a mental disorder, though the proportion experiencing severe impairment during childhood and adolescence is lower, at about 22%.⁵

Florida Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Acts

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) administers a statewide system of safety-net services for substance abuse and mental health (SAMH) prevention, treatment and recovery for children and adults who are otherwise unable to obtain these services.⁶ The DCF is charged with providing a coordinated system of care, to serves as a "no-wrong-door model" that provides a

¹ World Health Organization, *Mental Health: Concepts in Mental Health*, available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response> (last visited 3/7/25).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Mental Health Basics*, available at: <http://medbox.iab.me/modules/en-cdc/www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/basics.htm> (last visited 3/7/25).

³ *Id.*

⁴ National Institute of Mental Health (NIHM), *Mental Illness*, available at: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness> (last visited 3/7/25).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ See generally, Part I, Ch. 394, F.S., and Ch. 397, F.S.

fully array of behavioral health services from front end crisis intervention through long-term recovery services, including a range of prevention, acute interventions (e.g. crisis stabilization), residential treatment, transitional housing, outpatient treatment, and recovery support services.⁷

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Present Situation

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is the United States' three-digit telephone number for mental health crises, providing connection to free and confidential emotional support 24/7.⁸ Launched nationally on July 16, 2022, 988 was established by federal law as an easy-to-remember alternative to the 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.⁹ By dialing 988 (or texting 988, or using the web chat), callers in distress are routed to one of over 200 local crisis centers nationwide, where trained crisis counselors provide immediate counseling, support, and referrals to resources.¹⁰ By May 2024, nearly two years post-launch, the Lifeline had fielded 10.8 million total interactions, comprising roughly 6.4 million calls, 1.6 million chats, and 1.6 million texts.¹¹

Florida has also experienced growth in the 988 program. Since launching in July 2022, the 988 Lifeline has connected 95,672 individuals to mental health or related services and offered telephone-based support to 398,939 people across Florida.¹² The Florida 988 program is funded through a federal discretionary grant that will end in September of 2026; the DCF intends to become one of the first states to fully fund and operate their in-state 988 network without the need for federal discretionary grant funding.¹³ The 988 network ensures individuals have immediate access to trained professionals through a centralized helpline which ultimately reduces dependence on 911 and law enforcement for mental health emergencies.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 1 of the bill amends s. 394.4573, F.S., to add the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Call Center as a statutorily required part of the state's crisis response as part of the coordinated system of care. This change places duty of regulation and assessment of the 988 Suicide Crisis Lifeline with the DCF.

⁷ See s. 394.4573, F.S.

⁸ 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, The Lifeline and 988, available at: <https://988lifeline.org/current-events/the-lifeline-and-988/#:~:text=On%20July%2016%2C%202022%2C%20the,Vibrant> (last visited 3/7/25).

⁹ KFF, *One Year After the Launch of 988, the National Suicide and Crisis Hotline Has Received Nearly 5 Million Combined Calls, Texts, and Chats*, Available at: <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/press-release/one-year-after-the-launch-of-988-the-national-suicide-and-crisis-hotline-has-received-nearly-5-million-combined-calls-texts-and-chats/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20the%20988%20line%20steers,mental%20health%20crisis%20to%20recall> (last visited 3/7/25).

¹⁰ 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, *The Lifeline and 988*, available at: <https://988lifeline.org/current-events/the-lifeline-and-988/#:~:text=On%20July%2016%2C%202022%2C%20the,Vibrant> (last visited 3/7/25).

¹¹ KFF, *988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Two Years After Launch*, available at: <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/988-suicide-crisis-lifeline-two-years-after-launch/#:~:text=Since%20launch%20in%20July%202022%2C,third%20of%20total%20contacts%2C%20accounting> (last visited 3/7/25).

¹² Florida Department of Children and Families, 2025 Agency Analysis, p. 2 (on file with the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee).

¹³ *Id.*

Section 2 amends s. 394.67, F.S., to define “988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center” to mean a call center that meets national accreditation and recognized by the DCF to receive 988 calls, texts, or other forms of communication. The bill also adds the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center to the definition of “crisis services.” These changes integrate the role of 988 centers into the state’s behavioral health system, specifically as a crisis response service.

Section 3 creates s. 394.9088, F.S., to require the DCF to authorize and provide oversight to the 988 network crisis call centers. The bill prohibits 988 services to be provided by non-authorized call centers. The bill allows the DCF to ensure compliance with state and federal crisis response standards, improving service quality, and establishing a framework for coordination between 988 and 911 emergency services.

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Needs Assessment

Present Situation

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorders is a service that uses methadone or other medication as authorized by state and federal law, in combination with medical, rehabilitative, supportive, and counseling services in the treatment of individuals who are dependent on opioid drugs.¹⁴ This integrated approach aims to provide a whole-patient treatment strategy.¹⁵ Medications commonly used in MAT include methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone, which work by reducing cravings, alleviating withdrawal symptoms, and blocking the euphoric effects of substances.¹⁶

Current law requires the DCF to determine the need for new MAT providers in the state.¹⁷ This requirement does not allow opioid treatment programs (OTPs) or methadone clinics to open freely at will; instead, new clinics can only be established if the DCF finds there is an unmet need in a region for additional services.¹⁸ This needs-based licensure process serves as a state-level control on the number and location of MAT clinics.

Florida currently has 72 operational MAT clinics, collectively assisting nearly 22,000 clients statewide.¹⁹ However, under the current federal methodology, three needs assessments have been conducted since FY 2018/2019, and none have identified a statewide need for additional facilities. The Department lacks the flexibility to grant licenses outside of the annual need determination process, even in urgent situations such as the closure of the only clinic in a given area.²⁰

¹⁴ Section 397.311,7

¹⁵ Florida Department of Health – Palm Beach County, *Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)*, <https://palmbeach.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/OD2A/documents/Fact-Sheet-Medication-Assisted-Treatment.pdf> (last visited March 17, 2025)

¹⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Find Substance Use Disorder Treatment*, available at <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/treatment/find-treatment> (last visited March 17, 2025); Addiction Group, *What is Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)*, available at <https://www.addictiongroup.org/treatment/therapies/mat/> (last visited March 17, 2025)

¹⁷ Section 397.427, F.S.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Florida Department of Children and Families, 2025 Agency Analysis, pg.2 (on file with the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee).

²⁰ *Id.*

The federal algorithm presents additional challenges in addressing the needs of jail-based and rural populations. Current law does not exempt agencies that serve specific, limited groups, such as jails, prisons, and federally qualified health centers.²¹ Providing these facilities with the flexibility to offer services as needed would improve access to care for those specialized populations.

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 4 of the bill deletes s. 397.427(2) and amends s. 397.427(4), F.S., removing the requirement that the DCF must determine the need for establishing MAT programs. Removing the requirement for new providers to demonstrate community need fosters the expansion of MAT services, increasing access to treatment, especially within rural communities.

Forensic Evaluators

Present Situation

Chapter 916, F.S., establishes the Forensic Client Services Act detailing the framework for addressing mental health issues within the state's criminal justice system, specifically requiring the DCF to establish, locate, and maintain facilities and programs for the treatment or training of defendants who have been charged with a felony and who have been found to be incompetent to proceed in the legal system due to mental illness.²² The law guides how courts appoint mental health experts, assess a defendant's competency to stand trial, and manage individuals found not guilty by reason of insanity.

Mental health evaluations ensure that defendants with mental health conditions receive proper assessment and treatment. Courts appoint licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, or physicians to determine a defendant's competency, sanity, or need for involuntary treatment.²³ These professionals have specific forensic training and a one-time class from the DCF. These evaluations, conducted in jails, forensic centers, or medical facilities, help courts decide whether a defendant can stand trial or requires hospitalization. If deemed incompetent, individuals may be committed to a DCF facility for treatment until they can participate in legal proceedings or, if their behavior is non-threatening, may be released under supervision.²⁴

Defendants found not guilty by reason of insanity may be involuntarily committed if they pose a danger to themselves or others.²⁵ Placement in a State Mental Health Treatment Facility (SMHTF) ensures access to necessary treatment while maintaining public safety. Regular evaluations determine whether continued hospitalization is required or if a supervised release plan is appropriate. Mental health professionals conduct these assessments, provide expert testimony, and oversee treatment, helping courts balance the needs of individuals with mental illness against legal and public safety concerns.²⁶

²¹ *Id.*

²² Chapter 916, F.S.

²³ Section s. 916.11, F.S.

²⁴ Section 916.12, F.S.

²⁵ Section 916.15, F.S.

²⁶ *Id.*

Florida faces growing challenges with increasing referrals to the SMHTFs from courts and forensic hospital beds occupancy rates are above 97%. These challenges delay care and leave individuals in jail awaiting inpatient services. With 462 people on the waitlist and 333 waiting more than 15 days, the backlog continues to strain the system.²⁷ However, many of these individuals could be restored to competency through less restrictive alternatives, reducing the need for full hospitalization in an SMHTF. Court decisions on commitment orders are heavily influenced by evaluators' findings and recommendations, which help determine the most appropriate treatment setting.²⁸

In 2023, changes to Chapter 916, F.S., introduced a requirement for expert evaluators and courts to assess alternative treatment options before committing a defendant to a SMHTF. Evaluators are expected to provide a comprehensive report on available alternatives, including a thorough justification if those options are deemed inadequate.²⁹ Evaluators must consider a list of minimum alternative treatment options before ordering a defendant to be placed in a treatment facility. Experts must also report on the appropriateness of the following community-based options for treating and supporting the recovery of a patient:³⁰

- Mental health services;
- Treatment services;
- Rehabilitative services;
- Support services; and
- Case management services as those terms are defined in s. 394.67(16), F.S., which may be provided by or within:
 - Multidisciplinary community treatment teams;
 - Community treatment teams, such as Florida Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) teams;
 - Conditional release programs;
 - Outpatient services or intensive outpatient treatment programs; and
 - Supportive employment and supportive housing opportunities.³¹

However, the implementation of this requirement has not been consistent statewide. Without a legal requirement for forensic evaluators to participate in ongoing training, evaluators lack critical updates on new or revised statutes, alternative placements, and least restrictive options.³²

Effect of Proposed Changes

Section 5 amends s. 916.111, F.S., to update training requirements for mental health professionals conducting forensic evaluations, to require training on statutes and rules related to competency restoration, evidence-based practices, and least restrictive treatment alternatives and

²⁷ Florida Department of Children and Families, 2025 Agency Analysis, p. 3 (on file with the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee).

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ Section 916.12, F.S.

³¹ Section 394.67, F.S.

³² *Id.*

placements. This change will require provided trainings to be more accurate, aligned with current law, and produce more standardized evaluations in legal proceedings.

Section 6 amends s. 916.115, F.S., to require court-appointed mental health experts to complete both an initial and ongoing DCF-approved forensic training. The bill requires those experts performing juvenile evaluations to complete annual juvenile forensic competency evaluation training. The bill also requires all current expert evaluators to complete the newly created DCF-provided continuing education for experts by July 1, 2026 to remain an active evaluator.

These changes are intended to increase the training for expert forensic evaluators to increase the consistency of evaluations and ultimately improve judicial decision-making in criminal cases involving defendants with mental illness.

Section 7 amends s. 916.12, F.S., to require mental health evaluators to assess whether less restrictive treatment alternatives are available in the community and acceptable. The bill requires this assessment to involve current resources and information, to include the ongoing DCF-approved training required under the bill's language. This change is intended to ensure individuals receive care in the least restrictive setting possible, reducing unnecessary institutionalization.

Section 8 and Section 9 are conforming cross-reference changes.

Section 10 of the bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 394.4573, 394.67, 397.427, 916.111, 916.115, 916.12, 394.674, and 394.74.

This bill creates s. 394.9088 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.



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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs
(Calatayud) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section
394.4573, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.4573 Coordinated system of care; annual assessment;
essential elements; measures of performance; system improvement
grants; reports.—On or before December 1 of each year, the
department shall submit to the Governor, the President of the



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Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives an assessment of the behavioral health services in this state. The assessment shall consider, at a minimum, the extent to which designated receiving systems function as no-wrong-door models, the availability of treatment and recovery services that use recovery-oriented and peer-involved approaches, the availability of less-restrictive services, and the use of evidence-informed practices. The assessment shall also consider the availability of and access to coordinated specialty care programs and identify any gaps in the availability of and access to such programs in the state. The department's assessment shall consider, at a minimum, the needs assessments conducted by the managing entities pursuant to s. 394.9082(5). The department shall compile and include in the report all plans submitted by managing entities pursuant to s. 394.9082(8) and the department's evaluation of each plan.

(2) The essential elements of a coordinated system of care include:

(d) Crisis services, including the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center, mobile response teams, crisis stabilization units, addiction receiving facilities, and detoxification facilities.

Section 2. Subsection (8) of section 394.4598, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

394.4598 Guardian advocate.—

(8) The guardian advocate shall be discharged when the patient is discharged from an order for involuntary outpatient services placement or involuntary inpatient placement or when the patient is transferred from involuntary to voluntary status.



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The court or a hearing officer shall consider the competence of the patient pursuant to subsection (1) and may consider an involuntarily placed patient's competence to consent to treatment at any hearing. Upon sufficient evidence, the court may restore, or the hearing officer may recommend that the court restore, the patient's competence. A copy of the order restoring competence or the certificate of discharge containing the restoration of competence shall be provided to the patient and the guardian advocate.

Section 3. Subsection (5) of section 394.4625, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.4625 Voluntary admissions.—

(5) TRANSFER TO INVOLUNTARY STATUS.—When a voluntary patient, or an authorized person on the patient's behalf, makes a request for discharge, the request for discharge, unless freely and voluntarily rescinded, must be communicated to a physician, a clinical psychologist with at least 3 years of clinical postdoctoral experience ~~in the practice of clinical psychology~~, or a psychiatrist as quickly as possible, but not later than 12 hours after the request is made. If the patient meets the criteria for involuntary placement, the administrator of the facility must file with the court a petition for involuntary placement, within 2 court working days after the request for discharge is made. If the petition is not filed within 2 court working days, the patient must be discharged. Pending the filing of the petition, the patient may be held and emergency treatment rendered in the least restrictive manner, upon the order of a physician or a psychiatric nurse practicing within the framework of an established protocol with a



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psychiatrist, if it is determined that such treatment is necessary for the safety of the patient or others.

Section 4. Subsection (2) of section 394.4655, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.4655 Orders to involuntary outpatient placement.—

(2) A court or a county court may order an individual to involuntary outpatient placement under s. 394.467. The criteria for ordering a person to involuntary outpatient placement, as well as all of the requirements and processes for placement, including, but not limited to, recommendations for involuntary outpatient placement, petitions, appointment of counsel, and hearings on involuntary outpatient placement are provided in s. 394.467.

(3) When recommending an order to involuntary outpatient placement, the petitioner, as defined in s. 394.467(4), shall prepare a services plan for the patient in accordance with s. 394.467.

Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) and subsection (11) of section 394.467, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.467 Involuntary inpatient placement and involuntary outpatient services.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Court" means a circuit court or, for commitments only to involuntary outpatient services ~~as defined in s. 394.4655~~, a county court.

(11) PROCEDURE FOR CONTINUED INVOLUNTARY SERVICES.—

(a) A petition for continued involuntary services must be filed if the patient continues to ~~meets~~ the criteria for involuntary services.



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(b)1. If a patient receiving involuntary outpatient services continues to meet the criteria for involuntary outpatient services, the service provider must file in the court that issued the initial order for involuntary outpatient services a petition for continued involuntary outpatient services.

2. If a patient in involuntary inpatient placement continues to meet the criteria for involuntary services and is being treated at a receiving facility, the administrator must, before the expiration of the period the receiving facility is authorized to retain the patient, file in the court that issued the initial order for involuntary inpatient placement, a petition requesting authorization for continued involuntary services. The administrator may petition for inpatient or outpatient services.

3. If a patient in involuntary inpatient placement continues to meet the criteria for involuntary services and is being treated at a treatment facility, the administrator must, before expiration of the period the treatment facility is authorized to retain the patient, file a petition requesting authorization for continued involuntary services. The administrator may petition for inpatient or outpatient services. Hearings on petitions for continued involuntary services of an individual placed at any treatment facility are administrative hearings and must be conducted in accordance with s. 120.57(1), except that any order entered by the administrative law judge is final and subject to judicial review in accordance with s. 120.68. Orders concerning patients committed after successfully pleading not guilty by reason of insanity are governed by s.



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916.15.

4. ~~The court shall immediately schedule a~~ A hearing on the petition ~~shall~~ to be scheduled immediately and held within 15 days after the petition is filed.

5. The existing involuntary services order shall remain in effect until disposition on the petition for continued involuntary services.

(c) The petition must be accompanied by a statement from the patient's physician, psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse, or clinical psychologist justifying the request, a brief description of the patient's treatment during the time he or she was receiving involuntary services, and an individualized plan of continued treatment developed in consultation with the patient or the patient's guardian advocate, if applicable. If the petition is for involuntary outpatient services, it must comply with the requirements of subparagraph (4)(d)3. When the petition has been filed, the clerk of the court or the clerk of the Division of Administrative Hearings, as applicable, shall provide copies of the petition and the individualized plan of continued services to the department, the patient, the patient's guardian advocate, the state attorney, and the patient's private counsel or the public defender.

(d) The court shall appoint counsel to represent the person who is the subject of the petition for continued involuntary services in accordance with the provisions set forth in subsection (5), unless the person is otherwise represented by counsel or ineligible.

(e) Hearings on petitions for continued involuntary outpatient services must be before the court that issued the



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order for involuntary outpatient services. However, the patient and the patient's attorney may agree to a period of continued outpatient services without a court hearing.

(f) Hearings on petitions for continued involuntary inpatient placement in receiving facilities, or involuntary outpatient services following involuntary inpatient services, must be held in the county or the facility, as appropriate, where the patient is located.

(g) The court may appoint a magistrate to preside at the hearing. The procedures for obtaining an order pursuant to this paragraph must meet the requirements of subsection (7).

(h) Notice of the hearing must be provided as set forth in s. 394.4599.

(i) If a patient's attendance at the hearing is voluntarily waived, the court or the administrative law judge must determine that the patient knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily waived his or her right to be present, before waiving the presence of the patient from all or a portion of the hearing. Alternatively, if at the hearing the court or the administrative law judge finds that attendance at the hearing is not consistent with the best interests of the patient, the court or the administrative law judge may waive the presence of the patient from all or any portion of the hearing, unless the patient, through counsel, objects to the waiver of presence. The testimony in the hearing must be under oath, and the proceedings must be recorded.

(j) If at a hearing it is shown that the patient continues to meet the criteria for involuntary services, the court or the administrative law shall issue an order for continued



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involuntary outpatient services, involuntary inpatient placement, or a combination of involuntary services for up to 6 months. The same procedure shall be repeated before the expiration of each additional period the patient is retained.

(k) If the patient has been ordered to undergo involuntary services and has previously been found incompetent to consent to treatment, the court shall consider testimony and evidence regarding the patient's competence. If the patient's competency to consent to treatment is restored, the discharge of the guardian advocate is governed by s. 394.4598. If the patient has been ordered to undergo involuntary inpatient placement only and the patient's competency to consent to treatment is restored, the administrative law judge may issue a recommended order, to the court that found the patient incompetent to consent to treatment, that the patient's competence be restored and that any guardian advocate previously appointed be discharged.

(l) If continued involuntary inpatient placement is necessary for a patient in involuntary inpatient placement who was admitted while serving a criminal sentence, but his or her sentence is about to expire, or for a minor involuntarily placed, but who is about to reach the age of 18, the administrator shall petition the administrative law judge for an order authorizing continued involuntary inpatient placement.

The procedure required in this subsection must be followed before the expiration of each additional period the patient is involuntarily receiving services.

Section 6. Subsections (1) through (25) of section 394.67, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (2) through



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(26), respectively, subsection (4) is amended, and a new subsection (1) is added to that section, to read:

394.67 Definitions.—As used in this part, the term:

(1) “988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center” means a call center meeting national accreditation and recognized by the department to receive 988 calls, texts, or other forms of communication in this state.

(4) “Crisis services” means short-term evaluation, stabilization, and brief intervention services provided to a person who is experiencing an acute mental or emotional crisis, as defined in subsection (19) ~~(18)~~, or an acute substance abuse crisis, as defined in subsection (20) ~~(19)~~, to prevent further deterioration of the person’s mental health. Crisis services are provided in settings such as a crisis stabilization unit, an inpatient unit, a short-term residential treatment program, a detoxification facility, or an addictions receiving facility; at the site of the crisis by a mobile crisis response team; or at a hospital on an outpatient basis; or telephonically by a 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center.

Section 7. Section 394.9088, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

394.9088 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center.—

(1) The department shall authorize and provide oversight to 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call centers. Unless authorized by the department, call centers are not permitted to conduct 988 suicide and crisis lifeline services. The department may implement a corrective action plan, suspension or revocation of authorization for failure to comply with this section and rules adopted under this section.



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(2) The department shall adopt rules relating to:

(a) The process for authorization of 988 suicide and crisis
lifeline call centers.

(b) Minimum standards for 988 suicide and crisis lifeline
call centers to be authorized, including but not limited to,
service delivery, quality of care, and performance outcomes.

(c) The adequacy and consistency of 988 suicide and crisis
lifeline call centers' personnel certifications, accreditations,
quality assurance standards, and minimum training standards.

(d) Implementation of a cohesive statewide plan for 988
suicide and crisis lifeline call centers to achieve statewide
interoperability with the 911 system and to provide individuals
with rapid and direct access to the appropriate care.

Section 8. Subsections (3) through (9) of section 397.427,
Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (2) through (8),
respectively, and present subsections (2) and (5) are amended,
to read:

397.427 Medication-assisted treatment service providers;
rehabilitation program; needs assessment and provision of
services; persons authorized to issue takeout medication;
unlawful operation; penalty.—

~~(2) The department shall determine the need for
establishing providers of medication-assisted treatment services
for opiate addiction.~~

~~(a) Providers of medication-assisted treatment services for
opiate addiction may be established only in response to the
department's determination and publication of need for
additional medication treatment services.~~

~~(b) If needs assessment is required, the department shall~~



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~~annually conduct the assessment and publish a statement of findings which identifies each substate entity's need.~~

~~(c) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a) and (b), the license for medication-assisted treatment programs for opiate addiction licensed before October 1, 1990, may not be revoked solely because of the department's determination concerning the need for medication-assisted treatment services for opiate addiction.~~

~~(4)-(5) The department shall also determine the need for establishing medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders other than opiate dependence.~~ Service providers within the publicly funded system shall be funded for provision of these services based on the availability of funds.

Section 9. Subsection (3) of section 397.68141, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

397.68141 Contents of petition for involuntary treatment services.—A petition for involuntary services must contain the name of the respondent; the name of the petitioner; the relationship between the respondent and the petitioner; the name of the respondent's attorney, if known; and the factual allegations presented by the petitioner establishing the need for involuntary services for substance abuse impairment.

(3) If there is an emergency, the petition must also describe the respondent's exigent circumstances and include a request for an ex parte assessment and stabilization order that must be executed pursuant to s. 397.6818 ~~397.68151~~.

Section 10. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 916.111, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

916.111 Training of mental health experts.—The evaluation of defendants for competency to proceed or for sanity at the



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time of the commission of the offense shall be conducted in such a way as to ensure uniform application of the criteria enumerated in Rules 3.210 and 3.216, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure. The department shall develop, and may contract with accredited institutions:

(1) To provide:

(c) Training for mental health professionals in the application of these protocols and procedures in performing forensic evaluations and providing reports to the courts. Training must include, but is not limited to, information on statutes and rules related to competency restoration, evidence-based practices, least restrictive treatment alternatives and placement options as described in s. 916.12(4)(c); and

Section 11. Subsection (1) of section 916.115, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

916.115 Appointment of experts.—

(1) The court shall appoint no more than three experts to determine the mental condition of a defendant in a criminal case, including competency to proceed, insanity, involuntary placement, and treatment. The experts may evaluate the defendant in jail or in another appropriate local facility or in a facility of the Department of Corrections.

(a) The court ~~To the extent possible, The~~ appointed experts shall:

1. have completed forensic evaluator training approved by the department, and each shall Be a psychiatrist, licensed psychologist, or physician.

2. Have completed initial and ongoing forensic evaluator training, provided by the department.



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330 3. If performing juvenile evaluations, complete annually,
331 juvenile forensic competency evaluation training approved by the
332 department.

333 (b) Existing evaluators shall complete department-provided
334 continuing education training by July 1, 2026, to remain active
335 on the list.

336 (c)~~(b)~~ The department shall maintain and annually provide
337 the courts with a list of available mental health professionals
338 who have completed the initial and annual approved training as
339 experts.

340 Section 12. Paragraph (d) of subsection (4) of section
341 916.12, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

342 916.12 Mental competence to proceed.—

343 (4) If an expert finds that the defendant is incompetent to
344 proceed, the expert shall report on any recommended treatment
345 for the defendant to attain competence to proceed. In
346 considering the issues relating to treatment, the examining
347 expert shall specifically report on:

348 (d) The availability of acceptable treatment and, if
349 treatment is available in the community, the expert shall so
350 state in the report. In determining what acceptable treatments
351 are available in the community, the expert shall, at a minimum,
352 use current information or resources on less restrictive
353 treatment alternatives, as described in paragraph (c) and those
354 obtained from training and continuing education approved by the
355 department.

356
357 The examining expert's report to the court shall include a full
358 and detailed explanation regarding why the alternative treatment



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options referenced in the evaluation are insufficient to meet the needs of the defendant.

Section 13. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 394.674, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.674 Eligibility for publicly funded substance abuse and mental health services; fee collection requirements.—

(1) To be eligible to receive substance abuse and mental health services funded by the department, an individual must be a member of at least one of the department's priority populations approved by the Legislature. The priority populations include:

(a) For adult mental health services:

1. Adults who have severe and persistent mental illness, as designated by the department using criteria that include severity of diagnosis, duration of the mental illness, ability to independently perform activities of daily living, and receipt of disability income for a psychiatric condition. Included within this group are:

a. Older adults in crisis.

b. Older adults who are at risk of being placed in a more restrictive environment because of their mental illness.

c. Persons deemed incompetent to proceed or not guilty by reason of insanity under chapter 916.

d. Other persons involved in the criminal justice system.

e. Persons diagnosed as having co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

2. Persons who are experiencing an acute mental or emotional crisis as defined in s. 394.67 ~~s. 394.67(18)~~.

Section 14. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section



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394.74, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.74 Contracts for provision of local substance abuse and mental health programs.—

(3) Contracts shall include, but are not limited to:

(a) A provision that, within the limits of available resources, substance abuse and mental health crisis services, as defined in s. 394.67 ~~s. 394.67(4)~~, shall be available to any individual residing or employed within the service area, regardless of ability to pay for such services, current or past health condition, or any other factor;

Section 15. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete everything before the enacting clause and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to substance abuse and mental health care; amending s. 394.4573, F.S.; expanding mental health crisis services to include the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center; amending s. 394.4598, F.S.; authorizing the guardian advocate to be discharged when a patient is discharged from involuntary outpatient services; amending s. 394.4625, F.S.; requiring clinical psychologists who make determinations of involuntary placement at certain mental health facilities to have specified clinical experience; amending s. 394.4655, F.S.; providing cross-reference for specified criteria relating to



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orders to involuntary outpatient placement; amending s. 394.467, F.S.; providing that orders entered by administrative law judges for continued involuntary placement for patients at certain mental health facilities are final and subject to judicial review; requiring hearings to be scheduled immediately; requiring the clerk of the Division of Administrative Hearings to provide copies of petitions and individualized plans for continued services to the Department of Children and Families and other specified individuals; requiring the court or the administrative law judge to make certain determinations before waiving a patient's attendance at a hearing for continued involuntary placement; authorizing an administrative law judge to issue an order for involuntary services if the patient meets certain criteria; amending s. 394.67, F.S.; revising the definition of "crisis services" to include a 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center and defining the term "988 suicide and crisis lifeline call center"; creating s. 394.9088, F.S.; requiring the Department of Children and Families to authorize and provide oversight of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline call centers and adopt specified rules; amending s. 397.427, F.S.; removing requirements relating to providers of medication-assisted treatment services for opiate addiction; amending s. 916.111, F.S.; revising training requirements for mental health professionals; amending s. 916.115, F.S.; requiring



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446 court appointed experts to have completed specified
447 training and continued education; amending s. 916.12,
448 F.S.; providing requirements for an expert to
449 determine acceptable treatments available in a
450 community; amending ss. 394.674, 394.74, and 397.68141
451 F.S.; conforming cross-references; providing an
452 effective date.

By Senator Grall

29-00916-25

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to harming or neglecting children;
amending s. 39.01, F.S.; revising the definition of
the term "harm" as it relates to a child's health or
welfare; amending s. 827.03, F.S.; revising the
definition of the term "neglect of a child";
reenacting ss. 390.01114(2)(b) and 984.03(2), F.S.,
relating to the definitions of the terms "child abuse"
and "abuse," respectively, to incorporate the
amendment made to s. 39.01, F.S., in references
thereto; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraphs (a) and (f) of subsection (37) of
section 39.01, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

39.01 Definitions.—When used in this chapter, unless the
context otherwise requires:

(37) "Harm" to a child's health or welfare can occur when
any person:

(a) Inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child
physical, mental, or emotional injury. In determining whether
harm has occurred, the following factors must be considered in
evaluating any physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child:
the age of the child; any prior history of injuries to the
child; the location of the injury on the body of the child; the
multiplicity of the injury; and the type of trauma inflicted.

Such injury includes, but is not limited to:

1. Willful acts that produce the following specific

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injuries:

- a. Sprains, dislocations, or cartilage damage.
- b. Bone or skull fractures.
- c. Brain or spinal cord damage.
- d. Intracranial hemorrhage or injury to other internal organs.
- e. Asphyxiation, suffocation, or drowning.
- f. Injury resulting from the use of a deadly weapon.
- g. Burns or scalding.
- h. Cuts, lacerations, punctures, or bites.
- i. Permanent or temporary disfigurement.
- j. Permanent or temporary loss or impairment of a body part or function.

As used in this subparagraph, the term "willful" refers to the intent to perform an action, not to the intent to achieve a result or to cause an injury.

2. Purposely giving a child poison, alcohol, drugs, or other substances that substantially affect the child's behavior, motor coordination, or judgment or that result in sickness or internal injury. For the purposes of this subparagraph, the term "drugs" means prescription drugs not prescribed for the child or not administered as prescribed, and controlled substances as outlined in Schedule I or Schedule II of s. 893.03.

3. Leaving a child without adult supervision or arrangement appropriate for the child's age or mental or physical condition, so that the child is unable to care for the child's own needs, is subjected to obvious danger of which the child's caregiver knew or should have known, ~~or another's basic needs~~ or is unable

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to exercise reasonable ~~good~~ judgment to avoid serious harm to
himself or others in responding to any kind of physical or
emotional crisis. This subparagraph may not be construed to
restrict a caregiver from allowing a child of sufficient
maturity and physical condition from engaging in independent
unsupervised activities, including, but not limited to,
traveling to or from school or nearby locations by bicycle or on
foot, playing outdoors, or remaining at home or any other
location for a reasonable period of time, unless allowing such
activities constitutes conduct that is so reckless as to
endanger the health or safety of the child.

4. Inappropriate or excessively harsh disciplinary action
that is likely to result in physical injury, mental injury as
defined in this section, or emotional injury. The significance
of any injury must be evaluated in light of the following
factors: the age of the child; any prior history of injuries to
the child; the location of the injury on the body of the child;
the multiplicity of the injury; and the type of trauma
inflicted. Corporal discipline may be considered excessive or
abusive when it results in any of the following or other similar
injuries:

- a. Sprains, dislocations, or cartilage damage.
- b. Bone or skull fractures.
- c. Brain or spinal cord damage.
- d. Intracranial hemorrhage or injury to other internal
organs.
- e. Asphyxiation, suffocation, or drowning.
- f. Injury resulting from the use of a deadly weapon.
- g. Burns or scalding.

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h. Cuts, lacerations, punctures, or bites.

i. Permanent or temporary disfigurement.

j. Permanent or temporary loss or impairment of a body part or function.

k. Significant bruises or welts.

(f) Neglects the child. Within the context of the definition of "harm," the term "neglects the child" means that the parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare fails to supply the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or health care, although financially able to do so or although offered financial or other means to do so; however, the term does not include a caregiver allowing a child to engage in independent and unsupervised activities unless allowing such activities constitutes reckless conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child. Such independent and unsupervised activities include, but are not limited to, traveling to or from school or nearby locations by bicycle or on foot, playing outdoors, or remaining at home or any other location for a reasonable period of time. ~~However,~~ A parent or legal custodian who, by reason of the legitimate practice of religious beliefs, does not provide specified medical treatment for a child may not be considered abusive or neglectful for that reason alone, but such an exception does not:

1. Eliminate the requirement that such a case be reported to the department;

2. Prevent the department from investigating such a case; or

3. Preclude a court from ordering, when the health of the child requires it, the provision of medical services by a

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physician, as defined in this section, or treatment by a duly accredited practitioner who relies solely on spiritual means for healing in accordance with the tenets and practices of a well-recognized church or religious organization.

Section 2. Paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of section 827.03, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

827.03 Abuse, aggravated abuse, and neglect of a child; penalties.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(e) "Neglect of a child" means:

1. A caregiver's willful failure or omission to provide a child with the care, supervision, and services necessary to maintain the child's physical and mental health, including, but not limited to, food, nutrition, clothing, shelter, supervision, medicine, and medical services that a prudent person would consider essential for the well-being of the child. The term does not include a caregiver allowing a child to engage in independent and unsupervised activities unless allowing such activities constitutes willful and wanton conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child. Such independent and unsupervised activities include, but are not limited to, traveling to or from school or nearby locations by bicycle or on foot, playing outdoors, or remaining at home or any other location for a reasonable period of time; or

2. A caregiver's failure to make a reasonable effort to protect a child from abuse, neglect, or exploitation by another person.

Except as otherwise provided in this section, neglect of a child

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may be based on repeated conduct or on a single incident or omission that results in, or could reasonably be expected to result in, serious physical or mental injury, or a substantial risk of death, to a child.

Section 3. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 39.01, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section 390.01114, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

390.01114 Parental Notice of and Consent for Abortion Act.—

(2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(b) "Child abuse" means abandonment, abuse, harm, mental injury, neglect, physical injury, or sexual abuse of a child as those terms are defined in ss. 39.01, 827.04, and 984.03.

Section 4. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 39.01, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (2) of section 984.03, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

984.03 Definitions.—When used in this chapter, the term:

(2) "Abuse" means any willful act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual injury that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. Corporal discipline of a child by a parent or guardian for disciplinary purposes does not in itself constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child as defined in s. 39.01.

Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

BILL: SB 1286

INTRODUCER: Senator Grall

SUBJECT: Harming or Neglecting Children

DATE: March 18, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Rao	Tuszynski	CF	Pre-meeting
2.			ACJ	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 1286 amends the definition of harm and neglect of a child in ch. 39, F.S., to allow caregivers to let a sufficiently mature child partake in independent, unsupervised activities without considering these actions as harm or neglect of a child.

The bill considers independent, unsupervised activities as harm if the child is subjected to obvious danger of which the caregiver knew or should have known, or the child cannot exercise the reasonable judgment required to avoid serious harm upon responding to physical or emotional crises.

The bill considers independent, unsupervised activities as neglect of a child if such activities constitute reckless conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child.

Additionally, the bill amends the definition of neglect of a child in criminal statute to add a willful standard in a caregiver's failure or omission to provide a child with the necessary services to maintain the child's physical and mental health.

The bill also excludes independent, unsupervised activities that a child engages in from the definition of neglect of a child in ch. 827, F.S. unless the activities constitute a willful and wanton conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child.

The bill is not expected to have a fiscal impact on the government or private sector. *See* Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

Florida's Child Welfare System

Chapter 39, F.S., creates Florida's dependency system charged with protecting children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected.¹ Florida's child welfare system identifies children and families in need of services through reports to the central abuse hotline and child protective investigations. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and community-based care lead agencies (CBCs) work with those families to address the problems endangering children, if possible. If the problems cannot be addressed, the child welfare system finds safe out-of-home placements for these children.²

Child welfare services are directed toward the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.³ The DCF practice model is based on increasing the safety of the child within his or her home, using in-home services, such as parenting coaching and counseling to maintain and strengthen the child's natural supports in the home environment.⁴ These services are coordinated by DCF-contracted CBCs. The DCF is responsible for many child welfare services, including operating the central abuse hotline, performing child protective investigations, and providing children's legal services.⁵ Ultimately, the DCF is responsible for program oversight and the overall performance of the child welfare system.⁶

When child welfare necessitates that the DCF remove a child from the home to ensure his or her safety, a series of dependency court proceedings must occur to place that child in an out-of-home placement, adjudicate the child dependent, and if necessary, terminate parental rights and free the child for adoption. Steps in the dependency process usually include:⁷

- A report to the Florida Abuse Hotline.
- A child protective investigation to determine the safety of the child.
- The court finding the child dependent.
- Case planning for the parents to address the problems resulting in the child's dependency.
- Placement in out-of-home care, if necessary.
- Reunification with the child's parent or another option to establish permanency, such as adoption after termination of parental rights.⁸

¹ Chapter 39, F.S.

² Chapter 39, F.S.

³ Section 39.001, F.S.

⁴ See generally The Department of Children and Families, *Florida's Child Welfare Practice Model*, available at: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/child-family/child-and-family-well-being/floridas-child-welfare-practice-model> (last visited 2/25/25).

⁵ Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, *Child Welfare System Performance Mixed in First Year of Statewide Community-Based Care*, Report 06-50, June 2006, available at: <https://oppaga.fl.gov/Products/ReportDetail?rn=06-50> (last visited 2/25/25).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ See generally Ch. 39, F.S.

⁸ The state has a compelling interest in providing stable and permanent homes for adoptive children in a prompt manner, in preventing the disruption of adoptive placements, and in holding parents accountable for meeting the needs of children. See Section 63.022, F.S.

Central Abuse Hotline

The DCF is required to operate and maintain a central abuse hotline (hotline)⁹ to receive reports of known or suspected instances of child abuse¹⁰, abandonment¹¹, or neglect¹², or instances when a child does not have a parent, legal custodian, or adult relative available to provide supervision and care.¹³ The hotline must operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and accept reports through a single statewide toll-free telephone number or through electronic reporting.¹⁴

If the hotline determines a report meets the statutory criteria for child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, a DCF child protective investigator (CPI) must complete a child protective investigation.¹⁵

Child Maltreatment Index

The Child Maltreatment Index (Index) is utilized by central abuse hotline counselors and CPIs to determine if a report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect meets the criteria for verifying child maltreatment.¹⁶ The Index defines each maltreatment, factors to consider in the assessment of each maltreatment, and also frequently correlated maltreatments.¹⁷

There are 27 maltreatment types that can be assigned to a report. A report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect must contain at least one of the following maltreatment types; however, a report may include multiple maltreatment types. The maltreatment types are as follows:¹⁸

- Abandonment.
- Asphyxiation.

⁹ Hereinafter cited as “hotline.” The “Central Abuse Hotline” is the DCF’s central abuse reporting intake assessment center, which receives and processes reports of known or suspected child abuse, neglect or abandonment 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Chapter 65C-30.001, F.A.C. and Section 39.101, F.S.

¹⁰ Section 39.01(2), F.S. defines “abuse” as any willful act or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual abuse, injury, or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child’s physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired.

¹¹ Section 39.01(1), F.S. defines “abandoned” or “abandonment” as a situation in which the parent or legal custodian of a child or, in the absence of a parent or legal custodian, the caregiver, while being able, has made no significant contribution to the child’s care and maintenance or has made no significant contribution to the child’s care and maintenance or has failed to establish or maintain a substantial and positive relationship with the child, or both. “Establish or maintain a substantial and positive relationship” means, in part, frequent and regular contact with the child, and the exercise of parental rights and responsibilities.

¹² Section 39.01(53), F.S. states “neglect” occurs when a child is deprived of, or is allowed to be deprived of, necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child’s physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired or to be in danger of being significantly impaired, except when such circumstances are caused primarily by financial inability unless services have been offered and rejected by such person.

¹³ Section 39.201(1), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 39.101(1), F.S.

¹⁵ Prior to July 1, 2023, seven counties allowed the local sheriff’s office to perform child protective investigations. The 2023 legislative session transitioned this responsibility fully back to the Department after changes in Florida’s child welfare system aimed to integrate child protective investigations within existing crisis-oriented systems the DCF maintains. *See generally*: Laws of Fla. 2023-77.

¹⁶ Florida Department of Children and Families, *CFOP 170-4*, available at: <https://prod.myflfamilies.com/sites/default/files/2024-05/CFOP%20170-04%20Child%20Maltreatment%20Index.pdf> (last visited 3/12/25).

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

- Bizarre Punishment.
- Bone Fracture.
- Burns.
- Death.
- Environmental Hazards.
- Failure to Protect.
- Failure to Thrive/Malnutrition/Dehydration.
- Household Violence Threatens Child.
- Human Trafficking — CSEC.
- Human Trafficking — Labor.
- Inadequate Supervision.
- Internal Injuries
- Intimate Partner Violence Threatens Child.
- Medical Neglect.
- Mental Injury.
- Physical Injury.
- Sexual Abuse: Sexual Battery.
- Sexual Abuse: Sexual Exploitation.
- Sexual Abuse: Sexual Molestation.
- Substance-Exposed Newborn.
- Substance Misuse.
- Substance Misuse — Alcohol.
- Substance Misuse — Illicit Drugs.
- Substance Misuse — Prescription Drugs.
- Threatened Harm.

Hotline counselors utilize the definitions of these maltreatment types to determine if the reported information meets the criteria for acceptance of an investigation or special conditions report.¹⁹ Upon determination that the report should be accepted for investigation, the central abuse hotline notifies the DCF staff responsible for protective investigations.²⁰

Child Protective Investigations

Once a report is accepted by the hotline staff, the CPIs conduct a child protective investigation.²¹ These investigations consist of the following:²²

- A review of all relevant, available information specific to the child, family, and alleged maltreatment; family child welfare history; local, state, and federal criminal records check; and requests for law enforcement assistance provided by the abuse hotline.
 - Based on a review of available information, including the allegations in the current report, a determination shall be made as to whether immediate consultation should occur

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Section 39.301, F.S.

²¹ Section 39.301, F.S.

²² Section 39.301(9)(a), F.S.

- with law enforcement, the Child Protection Team, a domestic violence shelter or advocate, or a substance abuse or mental health professional.²³
- Face-to-face interviews with the child; other siblings, if any; and the parents, legal custodians, or caregivers.
 - Assessment of the child's residence, including a determination of the composition of the family and household.
 - Determine whether there is any indication that any child in the family or household has been abused, abandoned, or neglect; the nature and extent of present or prior injuries, abuse, or neglect, and any evidence thereof; and a determination as to the person or persons apparently responsible for the abuse, abandonment, or neglect.
 - Documentation of the present and impending dangers to each child based on the identification of inadequate protective capacity through utilization of a standardized safety assessment instrument (the Index).

CPIs utilize the definitions of maltreatment types to make a determination regarding each of the alleged maltreatments and make one of the following findings²⁴:

- **“Verified”** is used when a preponderance of the credible evidence results in a determination the specific harm or threat of harm was the result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect.
- **“Not Substantiated”** is used when there is credible evidence which does not meet the standard of being a preponderance to support that the specific harm was the result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect.
- **“No Indicators”** is used when there is no credible evidence to support that the specific harm was the result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

The findings of CPIs are used to determine the next course of action. If the CPI identifies present or impending danger, the CPI must implement a safety plan or take the child into custody. If impending danger is identified and the child is not removed, the CPI must create and implement a safety plan before leaving the home or location where there is present danger.²⁵ If impending danger is identified, the CPI must create and implement a safety plan as soon as necessary to protect the safety of the child. The safety plan may be modified by the CPI if necessary.²⁶

The CPI must either implement a safety plan for the child, which allows the child to remain in the home with in-home services or take the child into custody. If the child cannot safely remain in the home with a safety plan, the DCF must file a shelter petition and remove the child from his or her current home and temporarily place them in out-of-home care.²⁷

Harm to a Child's Health or Welfare

The Index utilizes the statutory definition of “harm” in the findings of a report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect as Verified, Not Substantiated, or No Indicators. Generally, the current

²³ Section 39.301(9)(a), F.S.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ Section 39.301, F.S.

²⁶ Section 39.301, F.S.

²⁷ Section 39.301, F.S.

definition of harm includes actions such as the following that negatively affect a child's health or welfare²⁸:

- Inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child physical, mental, or emotional injury.
- Commits, or allows to be committed, sexual battery, as defined in ch. 794, F.S., or lewd or lascivious acts, as defined in ch. 800, F.S., against the child.
- Abandons the child.
- Neglects the child.
- Exposes a child to a controlled substance or alcohol.
- Engages in violent behavior that demonstrates a wanton disregard for the presence of a child and could reasonably result in serious injury to the child.
- Negligently fails to protect a child in his or her care from inflicted physical, mental, or sexual injury caused by the acts of another.
- Makes the child unavailable for the purpose of impeding or avoiding a protective investigation unless the court determines that the parent, legal custodian, or caregiver was fleeing from a situation involving domestic violence.

The definition of harm includes specific instances in which harm to a child has occurred, including willful acts that produce specific injuries.²⁹ As used in this definition, the term "willful" refers to the intent to perform an action, not to the intent to achieve a result or to cause an injury.³⁰

Current law considers leaving a child without adult supervision so that the child is unable to care for the child's own needs or another's basic needs, or is unable to exercise good judgment in responding to any kind of physical or emotional crisis as meeting the criteria of harm. The current statutory language does not specify any independent or unsupervised actions that a child may partake in that do not meet the criteria for harm, or includes any language about the caregiver's knowledge of obvious danger.

Neglect of the Child

Neglect of the child is included in the definition of harm. Current law defines the term "neglects the child" to mean that the parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare fails to supply the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or health care, although financially able to do so or offered financial or other means to do so.³¹ The current statutory language does not provide exceptions to this term that relate to the independent and unsupervised activities of a child.

Abuse of Children - Criminal Law

Chapter 827, F.S. criminalizes the abuse of children. Current law defines "neglect of a child" for use in Ch. 827, F.S. as:³²

²⁸ Section 39.01(37), F.S.

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² Section 827.03(1)(e), F.S.

- A caregiver's failure or omission to provide a child with the care, supervision, and services necessary to maintain the child's physical and mental health, including, but not limited to, food, nutrition, clothing, shelter, supervision, medicine, and medical services that a prudent person would consider essential for the well-being of the child; or
- A caregiver's failure to make a reasonable effort to protect a child from abuse, neglect, or exploitation by another person.

Neglect of a child may be based on repeated conduct or on a single incident or omission that results in, or could reasonably be expected to result in, serious physical or mental injury, or a substantial risk of death, to a child.³³

Current law does not provide exceptions relating to the independent and unsupervised activities of a child.

Offenses Relating to the Abuse of Children

Florida law provides the following offenses for the abuse of children³⁴:

- A person who commits aggravated child abuse commits a felony of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084, F.S.
- A person who willfully or by culpable negligence neglects a child and in so doing causes great bodily harm, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement to the child commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084, F.S.
- A person who knowingly or willfully abuses a child without causing great bodily harm, permanent disability, or permanent disfigurement to the child commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084, F.S.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 of the bill amends the definition of harm in s. 39.01, F.S. to exclude circumstances in which a caregiver allows a child of sufficient maturity and physical condition from engaging in independent unsupervised activities from the definition of harm. Such independent unsupervised activities include, but are not limited to:

- Traveling to or from school or nearby locations by bicycle or on foot;
- Playing outdoors; or
- Remaining at home or any other location for a reasonable period of time, unless allowing such activities constitutes conduct that is so reckless as to endanger the health or safety of the child.

The bill specifies instances in which leaving a child without adult supervision or arrangement appropriate for the child's age, mental, or physical condition is considered harm. The bill establishes that a caregiver has harmed a child's health or welfare when the child is subjected to obvious danger of which the child's caregiver knew or should have known, or the child is unable to exercise reasonable judgment to avoid serious harm to himself or others in responding to any

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Section 827.03(2), F.S.

kind of physical or emotional crisis. The bill requires that a child must be able to exercise reasonable judgment to avoid serious harm to himself or others; meaning, a child cannot be left alone without adult supervision or arrangement appropriate for his or her age if he or she cannot exercise reasonable judgment to avoid harm to himself or others.

The bill specifies that allowing a child to engage in these independent and unsupervised activities does not constitute neglect of a child within the definition of harm, unless allowing such activities constitutes reckless conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child.

Section 2 of the bill amends s. 827.03, F.S. to include a willful standard to the definition of neglect of a child in criminal statute, ch. 827, F.S. This change provides that a caregiver must *willfully* fail or omit to provide a child with the care, supervision, and services necessary to maintain the child's physical and mental health to be considered as harm. The bill excludes independent and unsupervised activities that a caregiver allows a child to engage in from constituting the neglect of a child, unless allowing such activities constitutes willful and wanton conduct that endangers the health and safety of the child.

The bill considers independent and unsupervised activities to include, but not be limited to:

- Traveling to or from school or nearby locations by bicycle or on foot;
- Playing outdoors; or
- Remaining at home or any other location for a reasonable period of time.

Section 3 of the bill reenacts s. 390.01114, F.S., to incorporate the substantive changes of the bill.

Section 4 of the bill reenacts s. 984.03, F.S., to incorporate the substantive changes of the bill.

Section 5 of the bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill amends ss. 39.01 and 827.03 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

By Senator Grall

29-00687-25

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to insulin administration by direct-support professionals and relatives; amending s. 393.063, F.S.; defining the term "direct-support professional"; creating s. 393.504, F.S.; authorizing direct-support professionals and relatives of clients in group home facilities for individuals with developmental disabilities to administer insulin as prescribed to the client if specified conditions are met; providing group home facilities, direct-support professionals, and relatives of clients with immunity from civil liability for damages and civil and criminal penalties under certain circumstances; amending s. 1002.394, F.S.; conforming a cross-reference; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Present subsections (13) through (46) of section 393.063, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (14) through (47), respectively, and a new subsection (13) is added to that section, to read:

393.063 Definitions.—For the purposes of this chapter, the term:

(13) "Direct-support professional" means a person paid to provide services directly to a client receiving home and community-based services to address activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living, behavioral supports, employment supports, or other services to promote community

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integration of the client.

Section 2. Section 393.504, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

393.504 Administration of insulin.—

(1) Notwithstanding any other law, a direct-support professional or a client's relative may administer insulin to a client residing in a group home facility if all of the following conditions have been met:

(a) The group home facility has an established procedure to provide training to the direct-support professional or relative in the administration of insulin. The training must be provided by a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed under chapter 464; a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459; or a physician assistant licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459.

(b) The group home facility has adopted policies and procedures governing the administration of insulin by direct-support professionals and relatives. The policies and procedures must include, but need not be limited to, the following provisions:

1. For clients requiring insulin, the group home facility shall have on file the prescribed dosage of insulin required for the client and proof of the direct-support professional's or relative's training as required under paragraph (a).

2. The group home facility and the direct-support professional or relative shall coordinate in advance before insulin is administered to the client to avoid duplication in administration.

3. The group home facility shall establish emergency

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procedures related to the administration of insulin to clients.

4. The group home facility must certify any direct-support professional or relative to administer insulin under this section if he or she is in compliance with the requirements of this section.

5. The group home facility must immediately notify a direct-support professional or relative if he or she is not in compliance with this section and immediately cease to allow them to administer insulin.

(2) A group home facility that complies with this section and its established policies and procedures is immune from civil liability for damages arising out of the administration of insulin by a direct-support professional or a client's relative.

(3) A direct-support professional or relative administering insulin to a client residing in a group home facility in compliance with this section is immune from civil liability for damages or civil or criminal penalties arising out of the administration of insulin to the client.

Section 3. Paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section 1002.394, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.394 The Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.—

(2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(e) "Disability" means, for a 3- or 4-year-old child or for a student in kindergarten to grade 12, autism spectrum disorder, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, published by the American Psychiatric Association; cerebral palsy, as defined in s. 393.063; Down syndrome, as defined in s. 393.063; an intellectual disability, as defined in s. 393.063; a speech impairment; a language

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88 impairment; an orthopedic impairment; any other health
89 impairment; an emotional or a behavioral disability; a specific
90 learning disability, including, but not limited to, dyslexia,
91 dyscalculia, or developmental aphasia; Phelan-McDermid syndrome,
92 as defined in s. 393.063; Prader-Willi syndrome, as defined in
93 s. 393.063; spina bifida, as defined in s. 393.063; being a
94 high-risk child, as defined in s. 393.063(23)(a) ~~s.~~
95 ~~393.063(22)(a)~~; muscular dystrophy; Williams syndrome; rare
96 diseases which affect patient populations of fewer than 200,000
97 individuals in the United States, as defined by the National
98 Organization for Rare Disorders; anaphylaxis; a hearing
99 impairment, including deafness; a visual impairment, including
100 blindness; traumatic brain injury; hospital or homebound; or
101 identification as dual sensory impaired, as defined by rules of
102 the State Board of Education and evidenced by reports from local
103 school districts. The term "hospital or homebound" includes a
104 student who has a medically diagnosed physical or psychiatric
105 condition or illness, as defined by the state board in rule, and
106 who is confined to the home or hospital for more than 6 months.

107 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

BILL: SB 1736

INTRODUCER: Senator Grall

SUBJECT: Insulin Administration by Direct-support Professionals and Relatives

DATE: March 18, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Rao	Tuszynski	CF	Pre-meeting
2.			AHS	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 1736 creates a new section of law that allows direct-support professionals or a client's relative to administer insulin in an APD licensed group home facility to a client with a developmental disability.

The bill defines the term "direct-support professional" to refer to an individual paid to provide services directly to a client with developmental disabilities that receives home and community-based services.

The bill allows direct-support professionals or relatives to administer insulin in group home facilities if the group home facility provides training, and adopts policies and procedures governing the administration of insulin by direct-support professionals or relatives.

The bill provides immunity from civil liability to group home facilities that are compliant with the requirements for the administration of insulin. The bill also provides civil and criminal immunity to direct-support professionals or relatives arising out of the administration of insulin in group home facilities, so long as the direct-support professional or relative were compliant with the requirements of administration.

The bill is expected to have an insignificant, negative fiscal impact on the government or private sector. *See* Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

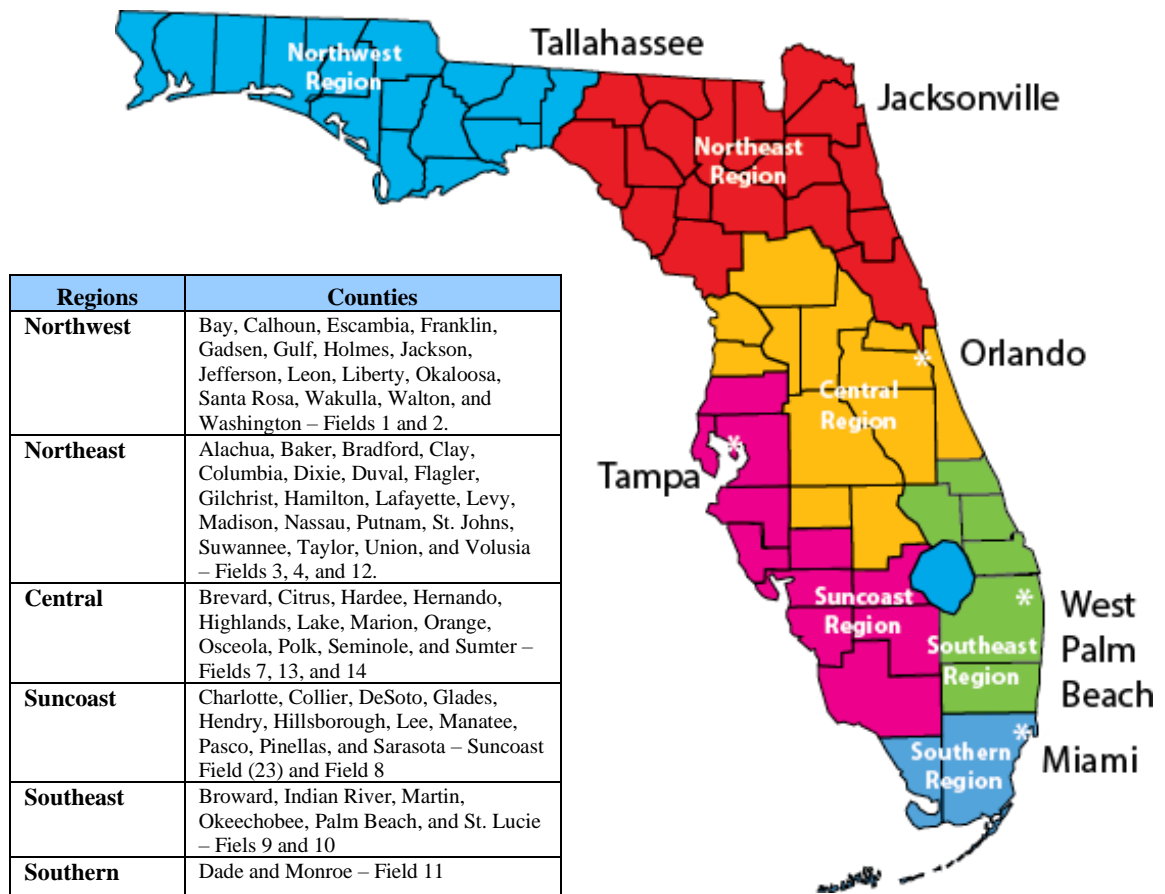
The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

Agency for Persons with Disabilities — Generally

Chapter 393, F.S., identifies the need to provide community-based services and programs for individuals with developmental disabilities that enable individuals to achieve their greatest potential for independent living while reducing the number of individuals in unnecessary institutional placements.¹

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) provides services to individuals with developmental disabilities and manages Medicaid waivers that provide federally approved services for individuals with developmental disabilities.² In addition to central headquarters in Tallahassee, the APD operates a total of six regional offices and 14 field offices throughout the state, as detailed below:³



¹ Section 393.062, F.S.

² Section 20.197, F.S.

³ Agency for Persons with Disabilities, *Regional Offices*, available at: <https://apd.myflorida.com/region/> (last visited 3/11/25).

Agency for Persons with Disability - Licensed Placement Array

Law requires the APD to license facilities and adult day training programs for individuals with developmental disabilities.⁴ The APD licenses the following facilities, which provide an array of services for individuals with developmental disabilities:⁵

Licensed Placements for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities	
Facility	Description
Foster Care Facility	A residential facility licensed under ch. 393, F.S. that provides a family living environment including supervision and care necessary to meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of its residents. The capacity of such a facility may not be more than three residents. ⁶
Group Home Facility	A residential facility licensed under ch. 393, F.S. which provides a family living environment including supervision and care necessary to meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of its residents. The capacity of such a facility shall be at least 4 but not more than 15 residents. ⁷
Residential Habilitation Center	A community residential facility licensed under ch. 393, F.S. which provides habilitation services. The capacity of such a facility may not be fewer than nine residents. After October 1, 1989, new residential habilitation centers may not be licensed and the licensed capacity for any existing residential habilitation center may not be increased ⁸
Adult Day Training Program	A program of services which takes place in a nonresidential setting, separate from the home or facility in which the client resides, and is intended to support the participation of clients in meaningful and valued routines of the community. These services include, but are not limited to, the acquisition, retention, or improvement of self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills. ⁹

The APD is required to adopt license application procedures, provider qualifications, facility and client care standards, requirements for client records, requirements for staff qualifications and training, and requirements for monitoring the licensed placements.¹⁰ The APD is required to adopt rules relating to the oversight and accountability of such placements.¹¹ If the licensee fails to comply with licensure or statutory requirements, Florida law authorizes the APD to take disciplinary action against the licensee, such as the revocation or suspension of a licensing, or the imposition of administrative fines.¹²

Administration of Medication in APD Licensed Facilities

Florida law allows an unlicensed direct service provider to supervise the self-administration of medication or to administer oral, transdermal, ophthalmic, otic, rectal, inhaled, enteral, or topical prescription medications to a client, provided the unlicensed direct service providers meets

⁴ Section 393.067, F.S.

⁵ See generally 65G-2, F.A.C.

⁶ Section 39.063(17), F.S.

⁷ Section 39.063(18), F.S.

⁸ Section 39.063(34), F.S.

⁹ Section 39.063(1), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 393.067, F.S.

¹¹ Section 393.067, F.S.

¹² Section 393.0673, F.S.

statutory requirements.¹³ Unlicensed direct service providers who have completed an APD-approved training course and have current validation to provide clients with medication administration or assist clients with self-administration of medication are referred to as Medication Assistance Providers under administrative rule.¹⁴ Medical Case Managers¹⁵ teach Basic Medication Administration Courses to unlicensed direct service providers.¹⁶ Currently, administrative rule does not reference medication administration by non-paid family members.¹⁷

Medication Assistance Providers are not allowed to prepare syringes for a client's use during the self-administration of medication via a subcutaneous, intra-dermal, intra-muscular, or intravenous route.¹⁸ Syringes, insulin pens, and insulin pumps administer insulin subcutaneously.¹⁹ Currently, licensed nurses are the only individuals who are allowed to administer insulin in APD facilities.²⁰

Upon a medication error, the Medical Assistance Provider or facility administrator is required to document the incident in a procedure identified in administrative rule.²¹

There is no reference to insulin administration in 65G-7, F.A.C., which establishes the requirements for Medication Administration in APD facilities.²²

Diabetes

Diabetes occurs when an individual's blood glucose, or blood sugar, is too high.²³ High blood glucose may lead to negative effects on an individual's heart, nerve, eye, and kidney function.²⁴ An individual receives blood glucose through the food he or she eats, and the hormone insulin, produced by the pancreas, assists blood glucose absorption into the cells to produce energy.²⁵

An individual with diabetes may have trouble producing the insulin necessary to help glucose absorption. The most common types of diabetes are type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes, which affects individuals during pregnancy.²⁶

¹³ Section 393.506, F.S.

¹⁴ 65G-7.001, F.A.C.

¹⁵ "Medical Case Managers" refer to a registered nurse or Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioner employed by the Agency to provide nursing consultation and technical assistance to an Area office regarding the medical care of Agency clients. *See* 65G-7.001, F.A.C.

¹⁶ Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities, *2025 Agency Analysis*, pg. 2, on file with the Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ 65G-7.005, F.A.C.

¹⁹ Shah, Rima B. et al. "Insulin delivery methods: Past, Present, and Future." *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Investigation* vol. 6, 1 (2016): 1-9. doi: 10.4103/2230-973X.176456.

²⁰ *Supra*, Note 16.

²¹ 65G-7.006, F.A.C.

²² 65G-7.001, F.A.C.

²³ National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, *Diabetes Statistics*, available at: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/diabetes-statistics> (last visited 3/14/25).

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, *Type 2 Diabetes*, available at: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes/type-2-diabetes> (last visited 3/14/25).

²⁶ National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, *Diabetes Statistics*, available at: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/diabetes-statistics> (last visited 3/14/25).

Type 1 diabetes typically occurs when an individual's immune system attacks and destroys the cells in the pancreas responsible for producing insulin, causing the pancreas to cease insulin production.²⁷ This causes abnormal levels of blood glucose, as the glucose cannot absorb into the cells and remains in an individual's blood.²⁸ An individual with type 1 diabetes will take synthetic insulin everyday to facilitate the absorption of blood glucose into an individual's cells.²⁹

Type 2 diabetes occurs when an individual's pancreas does not produce enough insulin or does not utilize insulin well.³⁰

Insulin Types and Administration

There are a variety of insulin types an individual may take to manage their diabetes.³¹ The following chart shows different types of insulin³²

Insulin Types				
Insulin Type	Onset	Peak Time	Duration	Method
Rapid acting	15 minutes	1 hour	2 to 4 hours	Usually taken right before a meal. Often used with longer-acting insulin.
Rapid-acting inhaled	10 to 15 minutes	30 minutes	3 hours	Usually taken right before a meal. Often used with injectable long-acting insulin.
Regular/short acting	30 minutes	2 to 3 hours	3 to 6 hours	Usually taken 30 to 60 minutes before a meal.
Intermediate acting	2 to 4 hours	4 to 12 hours	12 to 18 hours	Covers insulin needs for half a day or overnight. Often used with rapid- or short-acting insulin.
Long acting	2 hours	Does not peak	Up to 24 hours	Covers insulin needs for about a full day. Often used, when needed, with rapid- or short-acting insulin.
Ultra-long acting	6 hours	Does not peak	36 hours or longer	Provides steady insulin for long periods.
Premixed	5 to 60 minutes	Peaks vary	10 to 16 hours	Combines intermediate- and short-acting insulin. Usually taken 10 to 30 minutes before breakfast and dinner.

Source: Center for Disease Control

Individuals often take insulin differently depending on the type of insulin they use and what method they are most comfortable with when administering insulin. The following chart displays common methods for administering insulin³³:

²⁷ National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, *Type 1 Diabetes*, available at: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes/type-1-diabetes> (last visited 3/14/25).

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, *Type 2 Diabetes*, available at: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/what-is-diabetes/type-2-diabetes> (last visited 3/14/25).

³¹ Center for Disease Control Diabetes, *Types of Insulin*, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/about/how-to-use-insulin.html> (last visited 3/14/25).

³² Center for Disease Control Diabetes, *Types of Insulin*, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/about/how-to-use-insulin.html> (last visited 3/14/25).

³³ Center for Disease Control Diabetes, *4 Ways to Take Insulin*, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/about/4-ways-to-take-insulin.html> (last visited 3/14/25).

Insulin Administration Methods	
Method	Description
Syringe	This method delivers insulin through a needle. This is often referred to as “sliding-scale” administration as the amount needed (the bolus) is calculated based on the current blood glucose level and drawn from a container into a syringe and then administered subcutaneously.
Insulin Pen	Cartridges may be inserted into an insulin pen for insulin administration. Some insulin pens are pre-filled and single use. The insulin is injected through a needle.
Insulin Pump	Insulin pumps give an individual a dose of short- or rapid-acting insulin per hour. An individual calculates the insulin dosage, and the insulin in the pump delivers the bolus (short- or rapid-acting insulin take at or before mealtimes). The pump delivers insulin through a thin plastic tube placed in the fatty layer under an individual’s skin.
Insulin Inhaler	An individual uses an oral inhaler to deliver ultra-rapid-acting insulin at the beginning of meals. Inhaled insulin is used with an injectable long-acting insulin.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 of the bill amends s. 393.063, F.S. to define the new term “direct-support professional” in Ch. 393, F.S. A direct-support professional is defined as a person paid to provide services directly to a client with developmental disabilities that receives home and community-based services to address activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living, behavioral supports, employment supports, or other services to promote community integration of the client.

Section 2 of the bill creates s. 393.504, F.S. to allow a direct-support professional (DSP) or a client’s relative to administer insulin to a client in a group home facility if the group home facility has established training procedures and has adopted policies and procedures governing the administration of insulin by DSP and relatives. The term “relative” is defined in s. 393.063(30), F.S., and refers to an individual who is connected by affinity or consanguinity to the client and who is 18 years of age or older.

If a group home facility wants to allow a DSP or relative to administer insulin, the bill requires the group home facility to have an established procedure to provide training to the DSP or relative in the administration of insulin. This training must be provided by:

- A registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed under chapter 464;
- A physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459; or
- A physician assistant licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459.

The bill requires the group home facility to adopt policies and procedures governing the administration of insulin by direct-support professionals and relatives; these policies and procedures must include, but need not be limited to, the following provisions:

- Requirements to have the client’s prescribed dosage of insulin required for the client and proof of the direct-support professional’s or relative’s training on file.

- Coordination procedures in place between the group home facility and direct-support professional or relative to avoid duplication in insulin administration.
- Established emergency procedures related to the administration of insulin to clients.
- Certifications for direct-support professionals or relatives to administer insulin if the individual is in compliance with requirements.
- Requirements for the group home facility to immediately notify a direct-support professional or relative if he or she is not in compliance with these requirements and immediately cease to allow them to administer insulin.

The bill provides compliant group home facilities with immunity from civil liability for damages arising out of the administration of insulin by a direct-support professional or a client's relative.

The bill provides compliant direct-support professionals or relatives with immunity from civil liability or criminal penalties arising out of the administration of insulin to the client.

Section 3 of the bill amends s. 1002.394, F.S. to update cross references.

Section 4 of the bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The APD reports the bill language will require enhancements to the iConnect system, the APD's client data management and electronic visit verification system, and estimates the cost to be \$20,000 based on the number of hours it will take to make the necessary modifications to some of the impacted forms in the iConnect system.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill amends ss. 393.063 and 1002.394, Florida Statutes.
This bill creates s. 393.504, Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.



953948

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs (Grall)
recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Between lines 76 and 77
insert:

(4) For the purposes of this section, the administration of
insulin includes sliding scale insulin therapy, to include the
calculation of an insulin dose based on current blood glucose
and the administration of that calculated dose subcutaneously
using an insulin pen containing pre-measured doses or a syringe
filled with the calculated dose drawn from a vial of insulin.



953948

Section 3. Subsection (1) of section 393.506, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

393.506 Administration of medication.—

(1) An unlicensed direct service provider may supervise the self-administration of medication or may administer oral, transdermal, ophthalmic, otic, rectal, inhaled, enteral, or topical prescription medications to a client if the unlicensed direct service provider meets the requirements of this section. This includes the subcutaneous administration of insulin and epinephrine through an insulin pen, epinephrine pen, or similar device designed for self-administration.

===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

And the title is amended as follows:

Between lines 13 and 14
insert:

including specific administration methods in the meaning of "administration of insulin"; amending s. 393.506, F.S.; authorizing administration of insulin and epinephrine by certain methods;