

2014256er

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2 An act relating to public records; creating s.  
3 916.1065, F.S.; creating an exemption from public  
4 records requirements for a forensic behavioral health  
5 evaluation filed with a court; providing a definition  
6 for the term "forensic behavioral health evaluation";  
7 providing retroactive application; providing a  
8 statement of public necessity; providing an effective  
9 date.

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

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13 Section 1. Section 916.1065, Florida Statutes, is created  
14 to read:

15 916.1065 Confidentiality of forensic behavioral health  
16 evaluations.

17 (1) A forensic behavioral health evaluation filed with the  
18 court under this chapter is confidential and exempt from s.  
19 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.

20 (2) As used in this section, the term "forensic behavioral  
21 health evaluation" means any record, including supporting  
22 documentation, derived from a competency, substance abuse,  
23 psychosexual, psychological, psychiatric, psychosocial,  
24 cognitive impairment, sanity, or other mental health evaluation  
25 of an individual.

26 (3) The exemption under subsection (1) applies to forensic  
27 behavioral health evaluations filed with a court before, on, or  
28 after July 1, 2014.

29 Section 2. The Legislature finds that it is a public

2014256er

30 necessity that forensic behavioral health evaluations filed with  
31 the court pursuant to chapter 916, Florida Statutes, be  
32 confidential and exempt from disclosure under s. 119.07(1),  
33 Florida Statutes, and s. 24(a), Article I of the State  
34 Constitution. The personal health of an individual and any  
35 treatment that he or she receives is an intensely private  
36 matter. An individual's forensic behavioral health evaluation  
37 should not be made public merely because it is filed with the  
38 court. Protecting forensic behavioral health evaluations is  
39 necessary to ensure the health care privacy rights of all  
40 individuals. Making these evaluations confidential and exempt  
41 will protect information of a sensitive personal nature, the  
42 release of which could cause unwarranted damage to the  
43 reputation of an individual. Further, the knowledge that  
44 sensitive personal information is subject to disclosure could  
45 have a chilling effect on mental health experts who conduct the  
46 evaluations for use by the court. Therefore, making these  
47 evaluations confidential and exempt allows courts to effectively  
48 and efficiently make decisions relating to the competency of  
49 individuals who interact with the state courts system.

50 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.