

TRAINING MATERIALS FOR MANDATORY REPORTERS OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

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House Bill 4854 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Julie M. Rogers
Committee: Judiciary
Complete to 9-13-21

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4854 would amend the Child Protection Law to require comprehensive training materials to be created for individuals required to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

The act currently requires certain individuals to report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) if they have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or child neglect. These individuals are commonly referred to as “mandated reporters.” Mandated reporters include medical professionals, marriage therapists, licensed counselors, social workers, social service technicians, school counselors, professionals employed in a Friend of the Court office, school administrators, teachers, law enforcement officers, members of the clergy, and regulated child care providers. The act provides a detailed method for reporting the abuse and notifying DHHS.

The bill would add a new section to the act to require the creation of comprehensive training materials for individuals required to report suspected child abuse or child neglect. DHHS, in consultation with the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board and the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, would have to create the materials within 180 days after the bill’s effective date. DHHS would have to make the training materials publicly available on its website, in addition to any other form it chooses.

Employers or organizations that employ mandated reporters would have to provide the training package to those employees. However, this requirement would not apply to an employer or organization that provides its own employee training that is similar in substance to the training created under the bill.

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

Proposed MCL 722.623b

BACKGROUND:

The bill is a reintroduction of House Bill 4377 of the 2019-20 legislative session and House Bill 5796 of the 2017-18 legislative session. Both of those bills were passed by the House of Representatives. The bill is part of a larger package of bills to address sexual assault that were originally introduced following the revelation of hundreds of instances in which Larry Nassar, a nationally known physician employed by Michigan State University who also provided medical treatments to members of the USA Olympics women’s gymnastics team, was found to have engaged in practices that constituted criminal sexual conduct.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4854 would have a minimal fiscal impact on the Department of Health and Human Services. According to DHHS, because the department has already developed and posted mandatory reporter training materials and resources on the DHHS website, the cost of the bill's provisions that would require the department to create comprehensive training materials for mandatory reporters of child abuse or child neglect would be minimal. Since the department would be making these materials available, there would be no significant fiscal impact to local units of government.

In FY 2019-20, Children's Protective Services within DHHS investigated 70,242 cases of child abuse or neglect. Of those investigations, 71.6%, or 50,293 cases, were reported by a mandatory reporter and 28.4%, or 19,949 cases, were reported by non-mandatory reporters.

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