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HOUSE BILL NO. 334

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled January 2, 2014

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 15.2-1627.5, relating to local multidisciplinary child sexual abuse response teams.*

Patrons—Bell, Robert B., Carr, Minchew and Watts

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 15.2-1627.5 as follows:

§ 15.2-1627.5. Coordination of multidisciplinary response to child sexual abuse.

A. The attorney for the Commonwealth in each political subdivision in the Commonwealth shall establish and coordinate the activities of a multidisciplinary child sexual abuse response team to conduct regular reviews of cases involving child sexual abuse in the jurisdiction, which may be an existing multidisciplinary team established in the jurisdiction for other purposes provided that the requirements of this section are met, and shall implement protocols and procedures governing the activities of such team that are consistent with nationally established standards for multidisciplinary child sexual abuse response teams.

B. Multidisciplinary teams established pursuant to subsection A shall meet at least monthly, or more frequently if necessary, to review new and ongoing cases in the jurisdiction involving child sexual abuse and to make recommendations regarding the prosecution of such cases and the coordination of medical, social, and legal services to the victims and their family members. Every new case of child sexual abuse in the jurisdiction shall be reviewed by the multidisciplinary team within 60 days. The multidisciplinary team shall also work cooperatively with the judges and staff of the court serving the jurisdiction to coordinate the provision of services in accordance with this section.

C. The attorney for the Commonwealth or his designee shall coordinate regular case review meetings of the multidisciplinary team established pursuant to subsection A; however, if a child advocacy center serves the jurisdiction where the team is located, the center shall coordinate the regular case review meetings. The following individuals, or their designees, shall participate in case review meetings of the multidisciplinary team: the attorney for the Commonwealth; the chief of each police department in the jurisdiction; the sheriff of the jurisdiction, if his office conducts law-enforcement investigations that involve child abuse; the attorney for the county or city; and a representative of the local child protective services unit. The following individuals, or their designees, shall be invited to attend case review meetings of the multidisciplinary team: the school superintendent of the jurisdiction; a victim advocate, a mental health professional, and a health care provider from the local medical community; an Internet Crimes Against Children law-enforcement investigator serving the jurisdiction, if one exists; and a representative of a child advocacy center serving the jurisdiction, if one exists. Both the mental health professional and health care provider shall be knowledgeable in the treatment and provision of services to children who have been sexually abused. The mental health professional shall be a trauma informed mental health provider, if possible. At the discretion of the attorney for the Commonwealth, other parties or agencies may also be invited to participate.

D. Multidisciplinary teams established pursuant to this section shall develop Memoranda of Understanding regarding the exchange of information among members of the team for the purposes of investigating complaints of child sexual abuse, delivering services, and protecting children. Any information exchanged in accordance with such Memoranda of Understanding shall not be considered a violation of the laws of the Commonwealth governing confidentiality of information, including but not limited to §§ 63.2-102, 63.2-104, and 63.2-105.

E. In addition to the duties set forth in subsection C, multidisciplinary teams established pursuant to this section may also review and provide recommendations related to cases of child abuse and neglect that do not involve sexual abuse.

2. That the provisions of this act shall become effective on July 1, 2015.

INTRODUCED

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