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HOUSE BILL NO. 1494

Offered January 18, 2018

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 63.2-1606 of the Code of Virginia, relating to suspected adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation; mandated reporting; vulnerable adults.*

Patrons—Orrock and Ransone

Referred to Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 63.2-1606 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 63.2-1606. Protection of vulnerable adults; mandated and voluntary reporting.

A. As used in this section, "adult" means any person age 18 and older, regardless of capacity.

B. Matters giving reason to suspect the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of *vulnerable* adults shall be reported immediately upon the reporting person's determination that there is such reason to suspect. Medical facilities inspectors of the Department of Health are exempt from reporting suspected abuse immediately while conducting federal inspection surveys in accordance with § 1864 of Title XVIII and Title XIX of the Social Security Act, as amended, of certified nursing facilities as defined in § 32.1-123. Reports shall be made to the local department or the adult protective services hotline in accordance with requirements of this section by the following persons acting in their professional capacity:

1. Any person licensed, certified, or registered by health regulatory boards listed in § 54.1-2503, with the exception of persons licensed by the Board of Veterinary Medicine;

2. Any mental health services provider as defined in § 54.1-2400.1;

3. Any emergency medical services provider certified by the Board of Health pursuant to § 32.1-111.5, unless such provider immediately reports the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation directly to the attending physician at the hospital to which the *vulnerable* adult is transported, who shall make such report forthwith;

4. Any guardian or conservator of ~~an~~ a *vulnerable* adult;

5. Any person employed by or contracted with a public or private agency or facility and working with *vulnerable* adults in an administrative, supportive, or direct care capacity;

6. Any person providing full, intermittent, or occasional care to ~~an~~ a *vulnerable* adult for compensation, including, but not limited to, companion, chore, homemaker, and personal care workers; and

7. Any law-enforcement officer.

~~B.~~ C. The report shall be made in accordance with subsection A B to the local department of the county or city wherein the *vulnerable* adult resides or wherein the adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation is believed to have occurred or to the adult protective services hotline. Nothing in this section shall be construed to eliminate or supersede any other obligation to report as required by law. If a person required to report under this section receives information regarding abuse, neglect, or exploitation while providing professional services in a hospital, nursing facility, or similar institution, then he may, in lieu of reporting, notify the person in charge of the institution or his designee, who shall report such information, in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures for reporting such matters, immediately upon his determination that there is reason to suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Any person required to make the report or notification required by this subsection shall do so either orally or in writing and shall disclose all information that is the basis for the suspicion of adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Upon request, any person required to make the report shall make available to the adult protective services worker and the local department investigating the reported case of adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation any information, records, or reports ~~which~~ *that* document the basis for the report. All persons required to report suspected adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation shall cooperate with the investigating adult protective services worker of a local department and shall make information, records, and reports ~~which~~ *that* are relevant to the investigation available to such worker to the extent permitted by state and federal law. Criminal investigative reports received from law-enforcement agencies shall not be further disseminated by the investigating agency nor shall they be subject to public disclosure; such reports may, however, be disclosed to the Adult Fatality Review Team as provided in § 32.1-283.5 or to a local or regional adult fatality review team as provided in § 32.1-283.6 and, if reviewed by the Team or a local or regional adult fatality review team, shall be subject to applicable confidentiality requirements of the Team or a local or regional adult fatality review team.

~~C.~~ D. Any financial institution staff who suspects that ~~an~~ a *vulnerable* adult has been exploited financially may report such suspected exploitation to the local department of the county or city wherein

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59 the *vulnerable* adult resides or wherein the exploitation is believed to have occurred or to the adult
60 protective services hotline. For purposes of this section, "financial institution staff" means any employee,
61 agent, qualified individual, or representative of a bank, trust company, savings institution, loan
62 association, consumer finance company, credit union, investment company, investment advisor, securities
63 firm, accounting firm, or insurance company.

64 ~~D.~~ E. Any person other than those specified in subsection A B who suspects that ~~an~~ a *vulnerable*
65 adult is an abused, neglected, or exploited adult may report the matter to the local department of the
66 county or city wherein the *vulnerable* adult resides or wherein the abuse, neglect, or exploitation is
67 believed to have occurred or to the adult protective services hotline.

68 ~~E.~~ F. Any person who makes a report or provides records or information pursuant to subsection A B,
69 ~~C, or D, or E~~ or who testifies in any judicial proceeding arising from such report, records, or
70 information, or who takes or causes to be taken with the *vulnerable* adult's or the *vulnerable* adult's
71 legal representative's informed consent photographs, video recordings, or appropriate medical imaging of
72 the *vulnerable* adult who is the subject of a report shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability
73 on account of such report, records, information, photographs, video recordings, appropriate medical
74 imaging, or testimony, unless such person acted in bad faith or with a malicious purpose.

75 ~~F.~~ G. An employer of a mandated reporter shall not prohibit a mandated reporter from reporting
76 directly to the local department or to the adult protective services hotline. Employers whose employees
77 are mandated reporters shall notify employees upon hiring of the requirement to report.

78 ~~G.~~ H. Any person 14 years of age or older who makes or causes to be made a report of adult abuse,
79 neglect, or exploitation that he knows to be false ~~shall be~~ is guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor. Any
80 subsequent conviction of this provision ~~shall be~~ is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

81 ~~H.~~ I. Any person who fails to make a required report or notification pursuant to subsection A B shall
82 be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$500 for the first failure and not less than \$100 nor more
83 than \$1,000 for any subsequent failures. Civil penalties under subdivision A B 7 shall be determined by
84 a court of competent jurisdiction, in its discretion. All other civil penalties under this section shall be
85 determined by the Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services or his designee. The
86 Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services shall establish by regulation a process for imposing
87 and collecting civil penalties, and a process for appeal of the imposition of such penalty pursuant to §
88 2.2-4026 of the Administrative Process Act.

89 ~~I.~~ J. Any mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to suspect that ~~an~~ a *vulnerable* adult died as a
90 result of abuse or neglect shall immediately report such suspicion to the appropriate medical examiner
91 and to the appropriate law-enforcement agency, notwithstanding the existence of a death certificate
92 signed by a licensed physician. The medical examiner and the law-enforcement agency shall receive the
93 report and determine if an investigation is warranted. The medical examiner may order an autopsy. If an
94 autopsy is conducted, the medical examiner shall report the findings to law enforcement, as appropriate,
95 and to the local department or to the adult protective services hotline.

96 ~~J.~~ K. No person or entity shall be obligated to report any matter if the person or entity has actual
97 knowledge that the same matter has already been reported to the local department or to the adult
98 protective services hotline.

99 ~~K.~~ L. All law-enforcement departments and other state and local departments, agencies, authorities,
100 and institutions shall cooperate with each adult protective services worker of a local department in the
101 detection, investigation, and prevention of adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

102 **2. That the provisions of the first enactment of this act shall become effective on July 1, 2019.**

103 **3. That the Department of Social Services shall work with stakeholders to develop a definition of**
104 **"vulnerable adult" for the purposes of mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or**
105 **exploitation of vulnerable adults and shall report its recommendations to the Chairmen of the**
106 **House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation**
107 **and Social Services by December 1, 2018. In determining such definition of "vulnerable adult," the**
108 **Department of Social Services shall evaluate whether specific age criteria or other criteria should**
109 **be included.**