

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Health and Welfare to which was referred Senate Bill  
3 No. 189 entitled “An act relating to mental health response service protocols”  
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the  
5 bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in  
6 lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 7260 is added to read:

8 § 7260. MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE SERVICE GUIDELINES

9 (a) The Department shall develop guidelines for use by municipalities,  
10 including use by emergency medical technicians and public safety personnel,  
11 such as law enforcement officers as defined by 20 V.S.A. § 2351a and  
12 firefighters as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 3151, who are employed, volunteer, or  
13 are under contract with a municipality. The guidelines shall recommend best  
14 practices for de-escalation and for mental health response services, including  
15 crisis response services. The Department shall make the guidelines available  
16 to municipalities and publish the guidelines on the Department’s website.

17 (b) In developing the guidelines required pursuant to subsection (a) of this  
18 section, the Department shall consult with the following entities:

19 (1) the Department of Health;

20 (2) the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living;

21 (3) the Department of Public Safety;

- 1           (4) the Vermont Care Partners;
- 2           (5) the Vermont Psychiatric Survivors;
- 3           (6) the Vermont chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness;
- 4           (7) the Vermont Criminal Justice Council;
- 5           (8) the Vermont League of Cities and Towns; and
- 6           (9) any other entity the Department deems appropriate.

7           Sec. 2. PRESENTATION; SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDER SAFETY

8           (a) On or before November 15, 2024, the Agency of Human Services, in  
9           collaboration with the Vermont chapter of the National Association of Social  
10           Workers, shall convene one or more meetings related to social service provider  
11           safety with community-based social service organizations.

12           (1) The following community-based social service organizations and  
13           professions may be included in the meeting or meetings described in this  
14           subsection:

- 15           (A) the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence;
- 16           (B) the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness;
- 17           (C) mental health and health care providers;
- 18           (D) community action programs;
- 19           (E) restorative justice service providers; and
- 20           (F) disability service providers.

1           (2) In advance of the meeting or meetings described in this subsection,  
2           the participating community-based social service organizations and professions  
3           may review both studies related social service provider safety and individual  
4           social service provider safety experiences.

5           (b) On or before January 31, 2025, the Agency of Human Services, in  
6           collaboration with the Vermont chapter of the National Association of Social  
7           Workers, shall present findings and recommendations to the House Committee  
8           on Human Services and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare,  
9           including a list of the community-based social service organizations that  
10           participated in the meeting or meetings and the number of meetings convened.

11       Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

12           This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.  
13           and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act relating  
14           to mental health response service guidelines and social service provider safety”

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(Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR THE COMMITTEE