

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly that an initial forensic facility be authorized and operational beginning on July 1, 2024 in the nine-bed unit of the current Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital. This unit shall be relicensed as a therapeutic community residence and shall provide a safe environment for both clients and staff. Any comingling of staff between the psychiatric hospital units and the forensic facility shall be consistent with the requirements of any applicable collective bargaining agreements.

In preparation for the operation of a forensic facility, the work of the General Assembly in relation to this act shall guide:

(1) the Departments of Mental Health and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living in adopting rules; and

(2) the Working Group established pursuant to Sec. 6 of this act in recommending procedures and criteria for the commitment of individuals with a developmental or intellectual disability to a forensic facility.

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Sec. 4. PRESENTATION; FORENSIC FACILITY PROGRAMMING

On or before February 1, 2024, the Agency of Human Services shall present the following information to the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions, on Health Care, and on Human Services and to the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Institutions:

(1) a plan for staffing and programming at the forensic facility, including whether any specialized training will be required for staff members and whether any services provided at the forensic facility will be contracted to third parties;

(2) whether any additional resources are needed for the operation of the forensic facility; and

(3) an assessment of laws, regulations, rules, and policies governing psychiatric hospitals and therapeutic community residences to determine whether there are any conflicts with serving two populations in the same facility.