

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Health Care to which was referred Senate Bill No. 47
3 entitled “An act relating to the transport of individuals requiring psychiatric
4 care” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that
5 the House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended by striking out all
6 after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. § 7505 is amended to read:

8 § 7505. WARRANT AND CERTIFICATE FOR EMERGENCY

9 EXAMINATION

10 (a) In emergency circumstances where certification by a licensed physician is
11 not available without serious and unreasonable delay, and when personal
12 observation of the conduct of a person constitutes reasonable grounds to
13 believe that the person is a person in need of treatment, and ~~he or she~~ the
14 person presents an immediate risk of serious injury to ~~himself or herself~~ self or
15 others if not restrained, a law enforcement officer or mental health professional
16 may make an application, not accompanied by a physician’s certificate, to any
17 Superior judge for a warrant for an emergency examination. The application
18 shall be based on facts personally observed by the mental health professional
19 or the law enforcement officer or shall be supported by a statement of facts
20 under penalty of perjury by a person who personally observed the facts that
21 form the basis of the application.

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2 (b)(1) The law enforcement officer ~~or mental health professional~~ may take
3 the person into temporary custody ~~and shall apply to the court without delay~~
4 ~~for the warrant~~ if the law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe
5 that the person poses a risk of harm to self or others. The law enforcement
6 officer or a mental health professional shall apply to the court for the warrant
7 without delay while the person is in temporary custody. The law enforcement
8 officer, or a mental health professional if clinically appropriate, may then
9 transport the person if the law enforcement officer or mental health
10 professional conducting the transport has probable cause to believe that the
11 person poses a risk of harm to self or others.

12 (2) Transports conducted pursuant to this subsection shall provide
13 individuals with the same protections as provided to individuals in the custody
14 of the Commissioner who are transported pursuant to section 7511 of this title.

15 (c) If the judge is satisfied that a physician's certificate is not available
16 without serious and unreasonable delay, and that probable cause exists to
17 believe that the person is in need of an emergency examination, ~~he or she~~ the
18 judge may order the person to submit to an evaluation by a licensed physician
19 for that purpose.

20 (d)(1) If necessary, the court may order the law enforcement officer ~~or~~
21 ~~mental health professional~~ to transport the person to a hospital for an

1 evaluation by a licensed physician to determine if the person should be
2 certified for an emergency examination.

3 (2) Transports conducted pursuant to this subsection shall provide
4 individuals with the same protections as provided to individuals in the custody
5 of the Commissioner who are transported pursuant to section 7511 of this title.

6 (e) Authority to transport a person pursuant to this section shall expire if
7 the person is not taken into custody and transported within 72 hours after a
8 warrant is issued by a Superior judge.

9 (f) A person transported pursuant to subsection (d) of this section shall be
10 evaluated as soon as possible after arrival at the hospital. If after evaluation
11 the licensed physician determines that the person is a person in need of
12 treatment, ~~he or she~~ the licensed physician shall issue an initial certificate that
13 sets forth the facts and circumstances constituting the need for an emergency
14 examination and showing that the person is a person in need of treatment.
15 Once the licensed physician has issued the initial certificate, the person shall be
16 held for an emergency examination in accordance with section 7508 of this
17 title. If the licensed physician does not certify that the person is a person in
18 need of treatment, ~~he or she~~ the licensed physician shall immediately discharge
19 the person and cause ~~him or her~~ the person to be returned to the place from
20 which ~~he or she~~ the person was taken, or to such place as the person reasonably
21 directs.

1 Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 7511 is amended to read:

2 § 7511. TRANSPORTATION

3 (a) The Commissioner shall ensure that all reasonable and appropriate
4 measures consistent with public safety are made to transport or escort a person
5 subject to this chapter to and from any inpatient setting, ~~including escorts~~
6 ~~within a designated hospital or the Vermont State Hospital or its successor in~~
7 ~~interest or otherwise being transported~~ under the jurisdiction of the
8 Commissioner in any manner ~~which~~ that:

9 (1) prevents physical and psychological trauma;

10 (2) respects the privacy of the individual; and

11 (3) represents the least restrictive means necessary for the safety of the
12 patient.

13 (b) The Commissioner shall have the authority to designate the
14 professionals or law enforcement officers who may authorize the method of
15 transport of patients under the Commissioner's care and custody.

16 (c) When a professional or law enforcement officer designated pursuant to
17 subsection (b) of this section decides an individual is in need of secure
18 transport with mechanical restraints, the reasons for such determination shall
19 be documented in writing.

20 (d) It is the policy of the State of Vermont that mechanical restraints are not
21 routinely used on persons subject to this chapter unless circumstances dictate

1 that such methods are necessary. A law enforcement vehicle shall have soft
2 restraints available for use as a first option, and mechanical restraints shall not
3 be used as a substitute for soft restraints if the soft restraints are otherwise
4 deemed adequate for safety.

5 Sec. 3. REPORT; MENTAL HEALTH; WARRANT PROCESS

6 On or before January 15, 2024, the Department of Mental Health, in
7 consultation with Vermont Care Partners; Vermont Legal Aid; MadFreedom,
8 Inc.; Vermont Psychiatric Survivors; and persons with lived experience of a
9 mental health condition, shall submit a report to the House Committees on
10 Health Care and on Judiciary, and the Senate Committees on Health and
11 Welfare and on Judiciary containing any proposed changes to the warrant
12 process in 18 V.S.A. § 7505, including mechanisms to reduce safety risks and
13 reduce delays in accessing care.

14 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

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20 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE