

1 S.47

2 Introduced by Senators Lyons, Sears and Chittenden

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Health; mental health; transportation; custody; restraint

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to repeal  
7 authority related to a mental health professional transporting and taking into  
8 temporary custody an individual for whom a warrant for emergency  
9 examination is pending. It also proposes to prioritize the use of soft restraints  
10 over the use of mechanical restraints when the use of restraints is necessary.

11 An act relating to the transport of individuals requiring psychiatric care

12 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

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

14 § 7505. WARRANT AND CERTIFICATE FOR EMERGENCY

15 EXAMINATION

16 (a) In emergency circumstances where certification by a licensed physician  
17 is not available without serious and unreasonable delay, and when personal  
18 observation of the conduct of a person constitutes reasonable grounds to  
19 believe that the person is a person in need of treatment, and ~~he or she~~ the  
20 person presents an immediate risk of serious injury to ~~himself or herself~~ self or

1 others if not restrained, a law enforcement officer or mental health professional  
2 may make an application, not accompanied by a physician's certificate, to any  
3 Superior judge for a warrant for an emergency examination.

4 (b) The law enforcement officer ~~or mental health professional~~ may take the  
5 person into temporary custody and transport the person to a hospital, police  
6 barracks, or another safe location in accordance with section 7511 of this title.  
7 The law enforcement officer or mental health professional shall apply to the  
8 court without delay for the warrant while the person is in temporary custody.

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

14 (d) If necessary, the court may order the law enforcement officer ~~or mental~~  
15 ~~health professional~~ to transport the person, in accordance with section 7511 of  
16 this title, to a hospital for an evaluation by a licensed physician to determine if  
17 the person should be certified for an emergency examination.

18 (e) A person transported pursuant to subsection (d) of this section shall be  
19 evaluated as soon as possible after arrival at the hospital. If after evaluation  
20 the licensed physician determines that the person is a person in need of  
21 treatment, ~~he or she~~ the licensed physician shall issue an initial certificate that

1 sets forth the facts and circumstances constituting the need for an emergency  
2 examination and showing that the person is a person in need of treatment.  
3 Once the licensed physician has issued the initial certificate, the person shall be  
4 held for an emergency examination in accordance with section 7508 of this  
5 title. If the licensed physician does not certify that the person is a person in  
6 need of treatment, ~~he or she~~ the licensed physician shall immediately discharge  
7 the person and cause ~~him or her~~ the person to be returned to the place from  
8 which ~~he or she~~ the person was taken, or to such place as the person reasonably  
9 directs.

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

11 § 7511. TRANSPORTATION

12 (a) The Commissioner shall ensure that all reasonable and appropriate  
13 measures consistent with public safety are made to transport or escort a person  
14 subject to this chapter to and from any emergency department or inpatient  
15 setting, including escorts within a designated hospital or the Vermont State  
16 Hospital or its successor in interest or otherwise being transported under the  
17 jurisdiction of the Commissioner in any manner ~~which~~ that:

18 (1) prevents physical and psychological trauma;

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

20 (3) represents the least restrictive means necessary for the safety of the  
21 patient.

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

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

8 (d) It is the policy of the State of Vermont that mechanical restraints are not  
9 routinely used on persons subject to this chapter unless circumstances dictate  
10 that such methods are necessary. If a law enforcement officer or mental health  
11 professional deems it necessary to use restraints, soft restraints shall be  
12 considered as a first option. A law enforcement officer and mental health  
13 professional shall have soft restraints available for use, and mechanical  
14 restraints shall not be used as a substitute for soft restraints if the soft restraints  
15 are otherwise deemed adequate for safety.

16 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

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