

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 214 (HB 55)

2023 Regular Session

Selders

New law shall be cited and referred to as "The Mental Healing Justice for Incarcerated People Act".

New law provides a statement of legislative intent. Further provides that it is the intent of the legislature that the state allocate funding for new law to ensure both the access and delivery of quality care for individuals incarcerated within the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections (department).

New law further provides within the statement of legislative intent that the legislature also finds access to high-quality mental health services, regardless of the setting, to be of importance. Further provides that the state wholly supports efforts to assist incarcerated individuals suffering from severe and persistent mental illnesses in their efforts to navigate incarceration and reentry into society.

Existing law provides that the department may establish resources and programs for the treatment of inmates with a mental illness or an intellectual disability, either in a separate facility or as part of other institutions or facilities of the department.

New law amends existing law to make the establishment of resources and programs mandatory.

New law provides for the duties of the department as follows:

- (1) Provide screening to persons entering state prison facilities, upon intake, for mental health disorders as defined in the current edition of the Diagnostic And Statistical Manual, subject to appropriation by the legislature and the availability of resources.
- (2) Refer a person to a facility's mental health department if at any point during the person's incarceration, any department staff member suspects that an incarcerated person may have a mental illness.
- (3) Provide Mental Health First Aid training to employees on an annual basis, subject to appropriation by the legislature and the availability of resources.
- (4) Utilize trained peer support who have shared lived experiences to augment and enhance mental health services.
- (5) Provide an incarcerated person who has been diagnosed with a serious mental illness, prior to that person's release, with an appointment or walk-in instructions for a community mental health provider to ensure continuity of care to the extent that this is feasible and subject to the availability of department and community resources.

Effective August 1, 2023.

(Amends R.S. 15:830(A), (B), and (C); Adds R.S. 15:830(D) and (E))