

House Bill 4

By: Representatives Scott of the 76th, Davis of the 87th, Carter of the 93rd, Taylor of the 92nd, Hutchinson of the 106th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 3 of Title 37 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to general provisions related to examination and treatment for mental illness, so as
3 to require the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to create,
4 operate, and maintain an electronic inpatient psychiatric bed registry; to provide for
5 definitions; to provide for contracting with a third party; to require psychiatric facilities and
6 other providers to submit certain information to the department; to provide for accessibility
7 to the registry to end users; to provide for an advisory committee; to provide for quarterly
8 reporting to certain legislative committees; to authorize the department to establish a policy
9 for secondary use of registry data; to require the department to provide for registry data to
10 the contractor or entity that operates the Georgia Crisis and Access Line; to provide for
11 related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

13 **SECTION 1.**

14 Article 1 of Chapter 3 of Title 37 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
15 general provisions related to examination and treatment for mental illness, is amended by
16 adding a new Code section to read as follows:

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17 "37-3-9.

18 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

19 (1) 'Advisory committee' means the committee established pursuant to subsection (f) of
20 this Code section.

21 (2) 'Psychiatric facility' shall have the same meaning as 'facility' as defined in paragraph
22 (7) of Code Section 37-3-1.

23 (3) 'Registry' means the electronic inpatient psychiatric bed registry created pursuant to
24 subsection (b) of this Code section.

25 (b) The department shall establish and administer an electronic inpatient psychiatric bed
26 registry. The registry shall be a web-based resource to identify available psychiatric beds
27 in this state categorized by patient gender, acuity, age, and diagnosis. The registry shall
28 be accessible through the department's website.

29 (c) The department may, by contract, delegate the creation, operation, and maintenance
30 of the registry to a private entity.

31 (d) Psychiatric facilities and other providers providing diagnosis, care, treatment, or
32 hospitalization of persons who are mentally ill as identified by the department shall be
33 required to provide the department with the number of inpatient psychiatric beds available
34 in such facilities or by such other providers at the time the information is provided. The
35 information shall be provided by psychiatric facilities and such other providers on a basis
36 as close to real time as possible. Psychiatric facilities and other providers shall provide the
37 department with such information as specified under subsection (g) of this Code section.

38 (e) The registry shall be made accessible to end users of the registry, including, but not
39 limited to, prepaid inpatient health plans, licensed health plans, community mental health
40 services programs, acute care hospitals, psychiatric facilities, and employees and caregivers
41 with other appropriate providers.

42 (f) The department shall establish an advisory committee to provide guidance on the
43 creation, operation, and maintenance of the registry. The advisory committee shall include
44 representatives from the following groups:

45 (1) The department;

46 (2) The Department of Community Health;

47 (3) Psychiatric facilities;

48 (4) End users of the registry as described in subsection (e) of this Code section;

49 (5) Consumers, families, and advocates; and

50 (6) Law enforcement.

51 (g) The department, in consultation with the advisory committee, shall establish
52 requirements for psychiatric facilities and other providers identified by the department to
53 report information to the department.

54 (h) The department shall provide quarterly reports on the progress of implementing the
55 registry beginning on October 1, 2023, to the chairpersons of the House Committee on
56 Health and Human Services, the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, the House
57 Appropriations Health Subcommittee, and the Senate Appropriations Community Health
58 Subcommittee.

59 (i) The department, in consultation with the advisory committee, may establish a policy
60 for the secondary use of registry data.

61 (j) The department shall provide all of the information listed on the registry created
62 pursuant to this Code section to the contractor or entity that operates or maintains the
63 Georgia Crisis and Access Line."

64 **SECTION 2.**

65 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.