

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2019 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Health Policy

CS/HB 7099 — Child Welfare

by Health and Human Services Committee; Children, Families and Seniors Subcommittee; and Rep. Stevenson and others (CS/CS/SB 1650 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Albritton)

The bill makes a number of changes to Florida child welfare laws under ch. 39, F.S., and related statutes, primarily to ensure compliance with federal regulations for implementation of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act and to align with the federal Title IV-E and the Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) requirements. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides that guardianship assistance benefits under the GAP will be terminated if the guardian is no longer providing support for the child.
- Clarifies provisions relating to the extended foster care program, including requiring a young adult participating in the program to provide specified documentation of eligibility.
- Amends provisions relating to judicial reviews for young adults who are leaving and re-entering extended foster care.
- Clarifies provisions relating to financial assistance and other benefits available to children and young adults.
- Amends requirements relating to the licensure of family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies, to either meet federal requirements or to streamline requirements for Level I licensing for foster homes under s. 409.175, F.S.
- Reduces from three months to 60 days the period of time for a court review following a child's placement in a residential treatment program.
- Provides the Department of Children and Families (DCF) with rulemaking authority to administer the extended foster care and GAP programs.

The bill amends s. 39.402, F.S., to provide that, in the provision of psychotropic medications to a child in the custody of the DCF, a psychiatric nurse as defined under s. 394.455, F.S., may perform certain medical, psychiatric, and psychological examinations of and provide treatment to children in care, and may perform physical, mental, and substance abuse examinations of a person with or requesting child custody services.

The bill creates s. 402.57, F.S., to require the DCF to establish a direct-support organization to support the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.

The bill amends ss. 39.201(2) and 39.303(4), F.S., to provide new requirements for reports of child abuse and neglect related to children who are being treated in medical facilities in the state.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2019.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 114-0