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**SB-319 Child welfare services: public health nursing.** (2015-2016)

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**Senate Bill No. 319**

**CHAPTER 535**

An act to amend Section 56.103 of the Civil Code, and to amend Sections 5328.04 and 16501.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to child welfare services.

[ Approved by Governor October 06, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State October 06, 2015. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SB 319, Beall. Child welfare services: public health nursing.

Existing law requires the State Department of Social Services to establish a program of public health nursing in the child welfare services program, and requires counties to use the services of the foster care public health nurse under this program. Existing law requires the foster care public health nurse to perform specified duties, including participating in medical care planning and coordinating for a child in foster care.

This bill would authorize a foster care public health nurse, as part of his or her requirement to participate in medical care planning and coordinating for a child, to monitor and oversee the child's use of psychotropic medications. The bill would also require a foster care public health nurse to assist a nonminor dependent to make informed decisions about his or her health care. By imposing this additional duty on foster care public health nurses, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

Existing law restricts the disclosure of medical and mental health information by providers of health care and mental health care services, but authorizes disclosure of this information to county social workers, probation officers, or any other person who is legally authorized to have custody and care of a minor who is in temporary custody or subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, for the purpose of coordinating medical treatment and health care, mental health, and developmental disability services for the minor.

This bill would authorize the disclosure of this health care and mental health care information to a foster care public health nurse, as specified.

This bill would incorporate changes to Section 16501.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by both this bill and SB 238, which would become operative only if both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2016, and this bill is chaptered last.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** Section 56.103 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

**56.103.** (a) A provider of health care may disclose medical information to a county social worker, a probation officer, a foster care public health nurse acting pursuant to Section 16501.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or any other person who is legally authorized to have custody or care of a minor for the purpose of coordinating health care services and medical treatment provided to the minor, including, but not limited to, the sharing of information related to screenings, assessments, and laboratory tests necessary to monitor the administration of psychotropic medications.

(b) For purposes of this section, health care services and medical treatment includes one or more providers of health care providing, coordinating, or managing health care and related services, including, but not limited to, a provider of health care coordinating health care with a third party, consultation between providers of health care and medical treatment relating to a minor, or a provider of health care referring a minor for health care services to another provider of health care.

(c) For purposes of this section, a county social worker, a probation officer, foster care public health nurse, or any other person who is legally authorized to have custody or care of a minor shall be considered a third party who may receive any of the following:

(1) Medical information described in Sections 56.05 and 56.10.

(2) Protected health information described in Section 160.103 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(d) Medical information disclosed to a county social worker, probation officer, foster care public health nurse, or any other person who is legally authorized to have custody or care of a minor shall not be further disclosed by the recipient unless the disclosure is for the purpose of coordinating health care services and medical treatment of the minor and the disclosure is authorized by law. Medical information disclosed pursuant to this section may not be admitted into evidence in any criminal or delinquency proceeding against the minor. Nothing in this subdivision shall prohibit identical evidence from being admissible in a criminal proceeding if that evidence is derived solely from lawful means other than this section and is permitted by law.

(e) (1) Notwithstanding Section 56.104, if a provider of health care determines that the disclosure of medical information concerning the diagnosis and treatment of a mental health condition of a minor is reasonably necessary for the purpose of assisting in coordinating the treatment and care of the minor, that information may be disclosed to a county social worker, probation officer, foster care public health nurse, or any other person who is legally authorized to have custody or care of the minor. The information shall not be further disclosed by the recipient unless the disclosure is for the purpose of coordinating mental health services and treatment of the minor and the disclosure is authorized by law.

(2) As used in this subdivision, "medical information" does not include psychotherapy notes as defined in Section 164.501 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(f) The disclosure of information pursuant to this section is not intended to limit the disclosure of information when that disclosure is otherwise required by law.

(g) For purposes of this section, "minor" means a minor taken into temporary custody or as to whom a petition has been filed with the court, or who has been adjudged to be a dependent child or ward of the juvenile court pursuant to Section 300 or 601 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(h) (1) Except as described in paragraph (1) of subdivision (e), nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or otherwise affect existing privacy protections provided for in state or federal law.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to expand the authority of a social worker, probation officer, foster care public health nurse, or custodial caregiver beyond the authority provided under existing law to a parent or a patient representative regarding access to medical information.

**SEC. 2.** Section 5328.04 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

**5328.04.** (a) Notwithstanding Section 5328, information and records made confidential under that section may be disclosed to a county social worker, a probation officer, a foster care public health nurse acting pursuant to Section 16501.3, or any other person who is legally authorized to have custody or care of a minor, for the purpose of coordinating health care services and medical treatment, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 56.103 of the Civil Code, mental health services, or services for developmental disabilities, for the minor.

(b) Information disclosed under subdivision (a) shall not be further disclosed by the recipient unless the disclosure is for the purpose of coordinating health care services and medical treatment, or mental health or developmental disability services, for the minor and only to a person who would otherwise be able to obtain the information under subdivision (a) or any other law.

(c) Information disclosed pursuant to this section shall not be admitted into evidence in any criminal or delinquency proceeding against the minor. Nothing in this subdivision shall prohibit identical evidence from being admissible in a criminal proceeding if that evidence is derived solely from lawful means other than this section and is permitted by law.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to compel a physician and surgeon, licensed psychologist, social worker with a master's degree in social work, licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed professional clinical counselor, nurse, attorney, or other professional person to reveal information, including notes, that has been given to him or her in confidence by the minor or members of the minor's family.

(e) The disclosure of information pursuant to this section is not intended to limit disclosure of information when that disclosure is otherwise required by law.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to expand the authority of a social worker, probation officer, foster care public health nurse, or custodial caregiver beyond the authority provided under existing law to a parent or a patient representative regarding access to confidential information.

(g) As used in this section, "minor" means a minor taken into temporary custody or for whom a petition has been filed with the court, or who has been adjudged a dependent child or ward of juvenile court pursuant to Section 300 or 601.

(h) Information and records that may be disclosed pursuant to this section do not include psychotherapy notes, as defined in Section 164.501 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

**SEC. 3.** Section 16501.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

**16501.3.** (a) The State Department of Social Services shall establish and maintain a program of public health nursing in the child welfare services program that meets the federal requirements for the provision of health care to minor and nonminor dependents in foster care consistent with Section 30026.5 of the Government Code. The purpose of the public health nursing program shall be to promote and enhance the physical, mental, dental, and developmental well-being of children in the child welfare system.

(b) Under this program, counties shall use the services of a foster care public health nurse. The foster care public health nurse shall work with the appropriate child welfare services workers to coordinate health care services and serve as a liaison with health care professionals and other providers of health-related services. This shall include coordination with county mental health plans and local health jurisdictions, as appropriate. In order to fulfill these duties, the foster care public health nurse shall have access to the child's medical, dental, and mental health care information, in a manner that is consistent with all relevant privacy requirements.

(c) The duties of a foster care public health nurse shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(1) Documenting that each child in foster care receives initial and followup health screenings that meet reasonable standards of medical practice.

(2) Collecting health information and other relevant data on each foster child as available, receiving all collected information to determine appropriate referral and services, and expediting referrals to providers in the community for early intervention services, specialty services, dental care, mental health services, and other health-related services necessary for the child.

(3) Participating in medical care planning and coordinating for the child. This may include, but is not limited to, assisting case workers in arranging for comprehensive health and mental health assessments, interpreting the results of health assessments or evaluations for the purpose of case planning and coordination, facilitating the acquisition of any necessary court authorizations for procedures or medications, monitoring and oversight of psychotropic medications, advocating for the health care needs of the child, and ensuring the creation of linkage among various providers of care.

(4) Providing followup contact to assess the child's progress in meeting treatment goals.

(5) At the request of and under the direction of a nonminor dependent, as described in subdivision (v) of Section 11400, assisting the nonminor dependent in accessing physical health and mental health care, coordinating the delivery of health and mental health care services, advocating for the health and mental health care that meets the needs of the nonminor dependent, assisting the nonminor dependent to make informed decisions about his or her health care by, at a minimum, providing educational materials, and assisting the nonminor dependent to assume responsibility for his or her ongoing physical and mental health care management.

(d) The services provided by foster care public health nurses under this section shall be limited to those for which reimbursement may be claimed under Title XIX of the federal Social Security Act at an enhanced rate for services delivered by skilled professional medical personnel. Notwithstanding any other law, this section shall be implemented only if, and to the extent that, the department determines that federal financial participation, as provided under Title XIX of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1396 et seq.), is available.

(e) (1) The State Department of Health Care Services shall seek any necessary federal approvals for child welfare agencies to appropriately claim enhanced federal Title XIX funds for services provided pursuant to this section.

(2) Commencing in the fiscal year immediately following the fiscal year in which the necessary federal approval pursuant to paragraph (1) is secured, county child welfare agencies shall provide health care oversight and coordination services pursuant to this section, and may accomplish this through agreements with local public health agencies.

(f) (1) Notwithstanding Section 10101, prior to the 2011–12 fiscal year, there shall be no required county match of the nonfederal cost of this program.

(2) Commencing in the 2011–12 fiscal year, and each fiscal year thereafter, funding and expenditures for programs and activities under this section shall be in accordance with the requirements provided in Sections 30025 and 30026.5 of the Government Code.

**SEC. 3.5.** Section 16501.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

**16501.3.** (a) The State Department of Social Services shall establish and maintain a program of public health nursing in the child welfare services program that meets the federal requirements for the provision of health care to minor and nonminor dependents in foster care consistent with Section 30026.5 of the Government Code. The purpose of the public health nursing program shall be to promote and enhance the physical, mental, dental, and developmental well-being of children in the child welfare system.

(b) Under this program, counties shall use the services of a foster care public health nurse. The foster care public health nurse shall work with the appropriate child welfare services workers to coordinate health care services and serve as a liaison with health care professionals and other providers of health-related services. This shall include coordination with county mental health plans and local health jurisdictions, as appropriate. In order to fulfill these duties, the foster care public health nurse shall have access to the child's medical, dental, and mental health care information, in a manner that is consistent with all relevant privacy requirements.

(c) The duties of a foster care public health nurse shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(1) Documenting that each child in foster care receives initial and followup health screenings that meet reasonable standards of medical practice.

(2) Collecting health information and other relevant data on each foster child as available, receiving all collected information to determine appropriate referral and services, and expediting referrals to providers in the community for early intervention services, specialty services, dental care, mental health services, and other health-related services necessary for the child.

(3) Participating in medical care planning and coordinating for the child. This may include, but is not limited to, assisting case workers in arranging for comprehensive health and mental health assessments, interpreting the results of health assessments or evaluations for the purpose of case planning and coordination, facilitating the acquisition of any necessary court authorizations for procedures or medications, monitoring and oversight of psychotropic medications, advocating for the health care needs of the child, and ensuring the creation of linkage among various providers of care.

(4) Providing followup contact to assess the child's progress in meeting treatment goals.

(5) At the request of and under the direction of a nonminor dependent, as described in subdivision (v) of Section 11400, assisting the nonminor dependent in accessing physical health and mental health care, coordinating the delivery of health and mental health care services, advocating for the health and mental health care that meets the needs of the nonminor dependent, assisting the nonminor dependent to make informed decisions about his or her health care by, at a minimum, providing educational materials, and assisting the nonminor dependent to assume responsibility for his or her ongoing physical and mental health care management.

(d) The services provided by foster care public health nurses under this section shall be limited to those for which reimbursement may be claimed under Title XIX of the federal Social Security Act at an enhanced rate for services delivered by skilled professional medical personnel. Notwithstanding any other law, this section shall be implemented only if, and to the extent that, the department determines that federal financial participation, as provided under Title XIX of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1396 et seq.), is available.

(e) (1) The State Department of Health Care Services shall seek any necessary federal approvals for child welfare agencies to appropriately claim enhanced federal Title XIX funds for services provided pursuant to this section.

(2) Commencing in the fiscal year immediately following the fiscal year in which the necessary federal approval pursuant to paragraph (1) is secured, county child welfare agencies shall provide health care oversight and coordination services pursuant to this section, and may accomplish this through agreements with local public health agencies.

(f) (1) Notwithstanding Section 10101, prior to the 2011–12 fiscal year, there shall be no required county match of the nonfederal cost of this program.

(2) Commencing in the 2011–12 fiscal year, and each fiscal year thereafter, funding and expenditures for programs and activities under this section shall be in accordance with the requirements provided in Sections 30025 and 30026.5 of the Government Code.

(g) Public health nurses shall receive training developed pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 16501.4.

**SEC. 4.** Section 3.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 16501.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code proposed by both this bill and Senate Bill 238. It shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2016, (2) each bill amends Section 16501.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Senate Bill 238, in which case Section 3 of this bill shall not become operative.

**SEC. 5.** To the extent that this act has an overall effect of increasing the costs already borne by a local agency for programs or levels of service mandated by the 2011 Realignment Legislation within the meaning of Section 36 of Article XIII of the California Constitution, it shall apply to local agencies only to the extent that the state provides annual funding for the cost increase. Any new program or higher level of service provided by a local agency pursuant to this act above the level for which funding has been provided shall not require a subvention of funds by the state nor otherwise be subject to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.