



Ohio Revised Code

Section 5123.61 Reporting abuse, neglect, and other major unusual incidents.

Effective: October 12, 2016

Legislation: House Bill 158 - 131st General Assembly

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "Law enforcement agency" means the state highway patrol, the police department of a municipal corporation, or a county sheriff.

(2) "Abuse" has the same meaning as in section 5123.50 of the Revised Code, except that it includes a misappropriation, as defined in that section.

(3) "Neglect" has the same meaning as in section 5123.50 of the Revised Code.

(B) The department of developmental disabilities shall establish a registry office for the purpose of maintaining reports of abuse, neglect, and other major unusual incidents made to the department under this section and reports received from county boards of developmental disabilities under section 5126.31 of the Revised Code. The department shall establish committees to review reports of abuse, neglect, and other major unusual incidents.

(C)(1) Any person listed in division (C)(2) of this section, having reason to believe that an individual with a developmental disability has suffered or faces a substantial risk of suffering any wound, injury, disability, or condition of such a nature as to reasonably indicate abuse or neglect of that individual, shall immediately report or cause reports to be made of such information to the entity specified in this division. Except as provided in section 5120.173 of the Revised Code or as otherwise provided in this division, the person making the report shall make it to a law enforcement agency or to the county board of developmental disabilities. If the report concerns a resident of a facility operated by the department of developmental disabilities the report shall be made either to a law enforcement agency or to the department. If the report concerns any act or omission of an employee of a county board of developmental disabilities, the report immediately shall be made to the department and to the county board.



(2) All of the following persons are required to make a report under division (C)(1) of this section:

(a) Any physician, including a hospital intern or resident, any dentist, podiatrist, chiropractor, practitioner of a limited branch of medicine as specified in section 4731.15 of the Revised Code, hospital administrator or employee of a hospital, nurse licensed under Chapter 4723. of the Revised Code, employee of an ambulatory health facility as defined in section 5101.61 of the Revised Code, employee of a home health agency, employee of a residential facility licensed under section 5119.34 of the Revised Code that provides accommodations, supervision, and personal care services for three to sixteen unrelated adults, or employee of a community mental health facility;

(b) Any school teacher or school authority, licensed professional clinical counselor, licensed professional counselor, independent social worker, social worker, independent marriage and family therapist, marriage and family therapist, psychologist, attorney, peace officer, coroner, or residents' rights advocate as defined in section 3721.10 of the Revised Code;

(c) A superintendent, board member, or employee of a county board of developmental disabilities; an administrator, board member, or employee of a residential facility licensed under section 5123.19 of the Revised Code; an administrator, board member, or employee of any other public or private provider of services to an individual with a developmental disability, or any developmental disabilities employee, as defined in section 5123.50 of the Revised Code;

(d) A member of a citizen's advisory council established at an institution or branch institution of the department of developmental disabilities under section 5123.092 of the Revised Code;

(e) A member of the clergy who is employed in a position that includes providing specialized services to an individual with a developmental disability, while acting in an official or professional capacity in that position, or a person who is employed in a position that includes providing specialized services to an individual with a developmental disability and who, while acting in an official or professional capacity, renders spiritual treatment through prayer in accordance with the tenets of an organized religion.

(3)(a) The reporting requirements of this division do not apply to employees of the Ohio protection and advocacy system.



(b) An attorney or physician is not required to make a report pursuant to division (C)(1) of this section concerning any communication the attorney or physician receives from a client or patient in an attorney-client or physician-patient relationship, if, in accordance with division (A) or (B) of section 2317.02 of the Revised Code, the attorney or physician could not testify with respect to that communication in a civil or criminal proceeding, except that the client or patient is deemed to have waived any testimonial privilege under division (A) or (B) of section 2317.02 of the Revised Code with respect to that communication and the attorney or physician shall make a report pursuant to division (C)(1) of this section, if both of the following apply:

(i) The client or patient, at the time of the communication, is an individual with a developmental disability.

(ii) The attorney or physician knows or suspects, as a result of the communication or any observations made during that communication, that the client or patient has suffered or faces a substantial risk of suffering any wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the client or patient.

(4) Any person who fails to make a report required under division (C) of this section and who is a developmental disabilities employee, as defined in section 5123.50 of the Revised Code, shall be eligible to be included in the registry regarding misappropriation, abuse, neglect, or other specified misconduct by developmental disabilities employees established under section 5123.52 of the Revised Code.

(D) The reports required under division (C) of this section shall be made forthwith by telephone or in person and shall be followed by a written report. The reports shall contain the following:

(1) The names and addresses of the individual with a developmental disability and the individual's custodian, if known;

(2) The age of the individual with a developmental disability;

(3) Any other information that would assist in the investigation of the report.



(E) When a physician performing services as a member of the staff of a hospital or similar institution has reason to believe that an individual with a developmental disability has suffered injury, abuse, or physical neglect, the physician shall notify the person in charge of the institution or that person's designated delegate, who shall make the necessary reports.

(F) Any person having reasonable cause to believe that an individual with a developmental disability has suffered or faces a substantial risk of suffering abuse or neglect may report or cause a report to be made of that belief to the entity specified in this division. Except as provided in section 5120.173 of the Revised Code or as otherwise provided in this division, the person making the report shall make it to a law enforcement agency or the county board of developmental disabilities. If the individual is a resident of a facility operated by the department of developmental disabilities, the report shall be made to a law enforcement agency or to the department. If the report concerns any act or omission of an employee of a county board of developmental disabilities, the report immediately shall be made to the department and to the county board.

(G)(1) Upon the receipt of a report concerning the possible abuse or neglect of an individual with a developmental disability, the law enforcement agency shall inform the county board of developmental disabilities or, if the individual is a resident of a facility operated by the department of developmental disabilities, the department.

(2) On receipt of a report under this section that includes an allegation of action or inaction that may constitute a crime under federal law or the law of this state, the department of developmental disabilities shall notify the law enforcement agency.

(3) When a county board of developmental disabilities receives a report under this section that includes an allegation of action or inaction that may constitute a crime under federal law or the law of this state, the superintendent of the board or an individual the superintendent designates under division (H) of this section shall notify the law enforcement agency. The superintendent or individual shall notify the department of developmental disabilities when it receives any report under this section.

(4) When a county board of developmental disabilities receives a report under this section and



believes that the degree of risk to the person is such that the report is an emergency, the superintendent of the board or an employee of the board the superintendent designates shall attempt a face-to-face contact with the individual with a developmental disability who allegedly is the victim within one hour of the board's receipt of the report.

(H) The superintendent of the board may designate an individual to be responsible for notifying the law enforcement agency and the department when the county board receives a report under this section.

(I) An adult with a developmental disability about whom a report is made may be removed from the adult's place of residence only by law enforcement officers who consider that the adult's immediate removal is essential to protect the adult from further injury or abuse or in accordance with the order of a court made pursuant to section 5126.33 of the Revised Code.

(J) A law enforcement agency shall investigate each report of abuse or neglect it receives under this section. In addition, the department, in cooperation with law enforcement officials, shall investigate each report regarding a resident of a facility operated by the department to determine the circumstances surrounding the injury, the cause of the injury, and the person responsible. The investigation shall be in accordance with the memorandum of understanding prepared under section 5126.058 of the Revised Code. The department shall determine, with the registry office which shall be maintained by the department, whether prior reports have been made concerning an adult with a developmental disability or other principals in the case. If the department finds that the report involves action or inaction that may constitute a crime under federal law or the law of this state, it shall submit a report of its investigation, in writing, to the law enforcement agency. If the individual with a developmental disability is an adult, with the consent of the adult, the department shall provide such protective services as are necessary to protect the adult. The law enforcement agency shall make a written report of its findings to the department.

If the individual with a developmental disability is an adult and is not a resident of a facility operated by the department, the county board of developmental disabilities shall review the report of abuse or neglect in accordance with sections 5126.30 to 5126.33 of the Revised Code and the law enforcement agency shall make the written report of its findings to the county board.



(K) Any person or any hospital, institution, school, health department, or agency participating in the making of reports pursuant to this section, any person participating as a witness in an administrative or judicial proceeding resulting from the reports, or any person or governmental entity that discharges responsibilities under sections 5126.31 to 5126.33 of the Revised Code shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of such actions except liability for perjury, unless the person or governmental entity has acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

(L) No employer or any person with the authority to do so shall discharge, demote, transfer, prepare a negative work performance evaluation, reduce pay or benefits, terminate work privileges, or take any other action detrimental to an employee or retaliate against an employee as a result of the employee's having made a report under this section. This division does not preclude an employer or person with authority from taking action with regard to an employee who has made a report under this section if there is another reasonable basis for the action.

(M) Reports made under this section are not public records as defined in section 149.43 of the Revised Code. Information contained in the reports on request shall be made available to the individual who is the subject of the report, to the individual's legal counsel, and to agencies authorized to receive information in the report by the department or by a county board of developmental disabilities.

(N) Notwithstanding section 4731.22 of the Revised Code, the physician-patient privilege shall not be a ground for excluding evidence regarding the injuries or physical neglect of an individual with a developmental disability or the cause thereof in any judicial proceeding resulting from a report submitted pursuant to this section.