



State of Tennessee
PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 310

HOUSE BILL NO. 954

By Representatives Dunn, Hensley, Weaver, White, Butt, Fitzhugh, Harry Brooks

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 1003

By Senators McNally, Burks, Tate, Beavers, Herron, Stewart

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 53, Chapter 10, Part 3, relative to controlled substance database.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 53-10-302, is amended by adding a new appropriately designated subdivision thereto:

() "Law enforcement personnel" means agents of the Tennessee bureau of investigation, agents of a judicial district drug task force, and certified law enforcement officers certified pursuant to § 38-8-107;

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 53-10-304, is amended by deleting subsection (c) in its entirety and substituting instead the following:

(c) The purpose of the database is to assist in research, statistical analysis, criminal investigations, enforcement of state or federal laws involving controlled substances, and the education of health care practitioners concerning patients who, by virtue of their conduct in acquiring controlled substances, may require counseling or intervention for substance abuse, by collecting and maintaining data as described in this part regarding all controlled substances in Schedules II, III and IV dispensed in this state, and Schedule V controlled substances identified by the controlled substance database advisory committee as demonstrating a potential for abuse.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 53-10-306, is amended by deleting the section in its entirety and substituting instead the following:

(a) Information sent to, contained in, and reported from the database in any format is confidential and not subject to title 10, chapter 7, regarding public records, and not subject to subpoena from any court and shall be made available only as provided for in § 53-10-308 and to the following persons, and in accordance with the limitations stated and rules promulgated pursuant to this part:

(1) Personnel of the committee specifically assigned to conduct analysis or research;

(2) Authorized committee, board, or department of health personnel engaged in analysis of controlled substances prescription information as a part of the assigned duties and responsibilities of their employment;

(3) A licensed health care practitioner having authority to prescribe or dispense controlled substances, to the extent the information relates specifically to a current or bona fide prospective patient of the practitioner, to whom the practitioner has prescribed or dispensed or is prescribing or dispensing or considering prescribing or dispensing any controlled substance;

(4) A licensed pharmacist having authority to dispense controlled substances to the extent the information relates specifically to a current patient to whom that pharmacist has dispensed, is dispensing or considering dispensing any controlled substance;

(5) Personnel of the following entities actively engaged in analysis of controlled substances prescription information as a part of their assigned duties and responsibilities related directly to TennCare:

(A) The office of inspector general;

(B) The medicaid fraud control unit, and

(C) The bureau of TennCare's chief medical officer, associate chief medical directors, director of quality oversight, and associate director of pharmacy; or

(6) Law enforcement personnel; provided, that such personnel are engaged in the official investigation and enforcement of state or federal laws involving controlled substances; and that any law enforcement personnel receiving information from the database pursuant to this section shall comply with the requirements of this subsection:

(A)

(i) Any law enforcement agency or judicial district drug task force that wants one (1) or more of its officers or agents to have the authorization to request information from the database shall first pre-approve each such officer. Pre-approval shall be by the applicant's supervisor, who shall be either the chief of police, county sheriff or the judicial district drug task force director. The list of pre-approved applicants shall be sent to the district attorney general in the judicial district in which the agency or task force has jurisdiction.

(ii) By December 1 of each year, each district attorney general shall send to the board of pharmacy a list of applicants authorized to request information from the database from that general's judicial district for the next calendar year.

(B)

(i) If the Tennessee bureau of investigation wants one (1) or more of its agents to have the authorization to request information from the database each such agent shall first be pre-approved by the agent's immediate supervisor and division head. Approved applicants shall be sent to the board by the director.

(ii) By December 1 of each year, the TBI director shall send to the board of pharmacy a list of applicants authorized to request information from the database from the bureau for the next calendar year.

(C) An application submitted by a law enforcement agency, a judicial drug task force or the TBI shall include, but not be limited to the:

(i) Applicant's name; title; agency; agency address; agency contact number; agency supervisor; and badge number, identification number or commission number, and the business email address of each applicant officer or agent, the appropriate district attorney general and, if a TBI agent, the TBI director and their business email addresses; and

(ii) Signatures of the applicant, the applicants approving supervisor and the district attorney general of the judicial district in which the applicant has jurisdiction or the approving division head and the TBI director.

(D) It shall be a duty of the board, as part of its duties to maintain the database pursuant to § 53-10-305(c), to receive and verify the lists of authorized applications sent to it by the district attorneys general and the director of the TBI pursuant to this subsection.

(b) When requesting information from the database, the board shall require law enforcement personnel to provide a case number as part of the process for requesting information from the database. The case number entered shall correspond with an official investigation involving controlled substances and information requested should directly relate to the investigation.

(c) The board of pharmacy shall by rule, establish a fee for providing information to a law enforcement agency, judicial district drug task force or Tennessee bureau of investigation pursuant to this section. In determining the fee and type of fee to be charged, the board shall consider options such as an annual fee or a per use, incremental cost basis, fee.

(d)

(1) Law enforcement personnel and judicial district drug task force agents who are authorized to request information from the database shall resubmit their identifying application information that was submitted pursuant to subdivision (a)(6)(C) to the appropriate district attorney by November 20 of each year. Such resubmitted applications shall be sent by the appropriate district attorney general to the board by December 1 of each year. If during the calendar year a name is added to the list, removed from the list or information about a person on the list changes, the appropriate district attorney shall immediately notify the board of any changes to the list submitted or in the information submitted for each officer or agent on the list application.

(2) Tennessee bureau of investigation agents who are authorized to request information from the database shall resubmit their identifying application information that was submitted pursuant to subdivision (a)(6)(C) to the TBI director by November 20 of each year. Such resubmitted applications shall be sent by the TBI director to the board by December 1 of each year. If during the calendar year a name is added to the list, removed from the list or information about a person on the list changes, the TBI director shall immediately notify the board of any changes to the list submitted or in the information submitted for each officer or agent on the list application.

(e)

(1) Information obtained from the database may be shared with other law enforcement personnel or prosecutorial officials, only upon the direction of the officer or agent who originally requested the information and may only be shared with law enforcement personnel from other law enforcement agencies who are directly participating in an official joint investigation.

(2) Any information obtained from the data base that is sent to a law enforcement official or a judicial district drug task force agent shall also be sent to the district attorney general of the judicial district in which such officer or agent has jurisdiction. Likewise, any database information sent to a Tennessee bureau of investigation agent shall also be sent to the TBI director.

(f) To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of patient records, information obtained from the database by law enforcement personnel shall be retained by the law enforcement personnel's respective department or agency. The information obtained from the database shall not be made a public record, notwithstanding the use of the information in court for prosecution purposes. Information obtained from the database shall be maintained as evidence in accordance with each law enforcement agency's respective procedures relating to the maintenance of evidence.

(g) Any information disseminated pursuant to subdivisions (a)(1)-(5) shall be released to the individual or entity requesting the information by the database manager or by password protected internet access.

(h) Any licensed practitioner or pharmacist receiving patient-specific information pursuant to subdivision (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3) or (a)(4) shall not disclose the information to any person other than:

(1) The patient to whom the information relates and then only for the purpose of adjusting the patient's treatment plans or counseling the patient to seek substance abuse treatment;

(2) Other dispensers identified by the information and then only for the purposes of verifying the accuracy of the information; and

(3) Any law enforcement agency or judicial district drug task force to whom reporting of controlled substances being obtained in a manner prohibited by § 53-11-402(a)(6) is required by § 53-11-309.

(i) If a law enforcement officer, judicial district drug task force agent or Tennessee bureau of investigation agent has probable cause to believe, based upon information received from a database request, that a prescriber or pharmacist may be acting or may have acted in violation of the law, the officer or agent shall consult with the board of pharmacy inspector's office if a pharmacist and the health related boards' investigations unit if a prescriber.

(j)

(1) At least every six (6) months, the board shall send a list to each district attorney general containing all requests made for database information during the previous six (6) months. The list shall include the name of the requesting officer or agent, the officer or agent's agency, the date of the request, and the nature of the request, including the case number, for each officer or agent making a request in such district attorney's judicial district. Likewise, a list shall be sent to the director of the Tennessee bureau of investigation for all TBI agents making requests during the previous six (6) months.

(2) Each district attorney general and the Tennessee bureau of investigation director shall use the list to perform an audit to determine if the database information requests made during the preceding six (6) month period correspond to specific cases under investigation in the applicable judicial district or by the bureau and if the information requested is relevant and pertinent to an investigation.

(3) Each district attorney general and the TBI director shall verify all database information requests contained on the list received and send it back to the board within sixty (60) days of receipt. If a database information request does not correspond to an investigation in the applicable jurisdiction or if the information requested was not relevant or pertinent to the information requested, the district attorney general or director shall so note on the verified list and shall investigate the discrepancy and make a report back to the board within a reasonable period of time.

(4) The results of the audit conducted pursuant to subdivision (j)(2) shall be discoverable by a prescriber or pharmacist charged with violating any state or federal law involving controlled substances or under a notice of charges proffered by a licensing board for a violation of any law involving controlled substances, but only the results pertaining to that prescriber or pharmacist is discoverable. However, if there is an active criminal investigation involving a prescriber or the prescriber is under investigation by the health related boards' investigation unit, the results of the audit conducted pursuant to subdivision (j)(2) shall not be discoverable by the prescriber during either such period.

(k)

(1) Any person who obtains or attempts to obtain information from the database by misrepresentation or fraud is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

(2) Any person who knowingly uses, releases, publishes, or otherwise makes available to any other person or entity any information submitted to, contained in, or obtained from the database for any purpose other than those specified in this part is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

(3) Intentional unauthorized use or disclosure of database information by law enforcement personnel, judicial district drug task force members or TBI agents shall be punishable as a Class A misdemeanor.

(4) Any law enforcement personnel, judicial district drug task force member or TBI agent charged with a violation of this section shall have such person's authorization to request information from the database suspended pending final disposition of any criminal prosecution. Any law enforcement personnel, judicial district drug task force member or TBI agent found guilty of a violation of this subsection (i) shall have such person's authorization to request information from the database permanently revoked.

(l)

(A) The following personnel of the department of mental health actively engaged in analysis of controlled substances prescription information as a part of their assigned duties and responsibilities shall have access to the database for controlled substances prescription information for specific patients:

(i) The chief pharmacist;

(ii) The state opioid treatment authority (SOTA) or SOTA designee; and

(iii) The medical director.

(B) Aggregate controlled substances prescribing information from the database may be provided upon request by the following personnel of the department of mental health, who are actively engaged in analysis of controlled substances prescription information as provided in this subsection, and may be shared with other personnel of the department of mental health as needed to fulfill assigned duties and responsibilities:

(i) The chief pharmacist;

(ii) The SOTA; or

(iii) The medical director.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 53-10-303, is amended by adding the following as a new subsection:

()

(1) The committee shall have the duty to examine database information to identify unusual patterns of prescribing and dispensing controlled substances that appear to be higher than normal, taking into account the particular specialty, circumstances, patient-type or location of the prescriber or dispenser.

(2)

(A) If the committee determines that a pharmacist or pharmacy has an unusually high pattern of dispensing controlled substances that is

not explained by other factors, it shall refer the pharmacist or pharmacy to the chief board of pharmacy investigator.

(B) When the pharmacy investigator completes the investigation of any pharmacy or pharmacist referred to it by the committee pursuant to this subsection, the investigator shall report the results of the investigation back to the committee as follows:

(i) The investigator shall report that the investigation was dismissed if the results of the investigation indicate that the pharmacist or pharmacy had an unusually high dispensing pattern for explainable, legitimate and lawful reasons; or

(ii) The investigator shall report that the investigation was referred to the pharmacy board if the results indicate that a prescriber has an unusually high pattern of prescribing or dispensing controlled substances that are not explained by other factors.

(C) If the action taken by the board indicate that the pharmacist or pharmacy had an unusually high dispensing pattern for explainable, legitimate and lawful reasons, the committee shall take that finding into consideration before it again refers the same pharmacist or pharmacy to the investigator based upon similar conduct.

(3)

(A) If the committee determines that a prescriber has an unusually high pattern of prescribing or dispensing controlled substances that are not explained by other factors, it shall refer the prescriber to the health related boards' investigation unit.

(B) When the boards' investigator completes the investigation of any prescriber referred to it by the committee pursuant to this subsection, the investigator shall report the results of the investigation back to the committee as follows:

(i) The investigator shall report that the investigation was dismissed if the results of the investigation indicate that the prescriber had an unusually high dispensing pattern for explainable, legitimate and lawful reasons; or

(ii) The investigator shall report that the investigation was referred to the health related boards if the results indicate that a prescriber has an unusually high pattern of prescribing or dispensing controlled substances that are not explained by other factors.

(C) If the action taken by the board indicate that the prescriber had an unusually high dispensing or prescribing pattern for explainable, legitimate and lawful reasons, the committee shall take that finding into consideration before it again refers the same prescriber to the health related boards' investigation unit based upon similar conduct.

(4) If a pharmacy investigator or a member of the health related boards' investigation unit has reason to believe during any part of an investigation that a prescriber or dispenser is in violation of a criminal law, the investigator is authorized to report the conduct to the appropriate district attorney general.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 53-10-309, is amended by adding the following language to the end of the section:

In addition to the annual report submitted to the general assembly by the committee, authorized committee, board, or department of health personnel engaged in

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analysis of controlled substance prescription information as a part of the assigned duties and responsibilities of their employment shall release information from the database requested by a member of the general assembly that is related to research, statistical analysis, or education of health care practitioners relative to controlled substances. However, no report released pursuant to this section shall contain the name or other identifying information of a specific prescriber or pharmacist contained in the report. All information released from the database for such a report shall be in the aggregate.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2011, the public welfare requiring it.

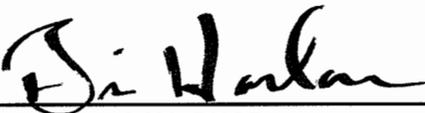
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PASSED: May 12, 2011


BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES


RON RAMSEY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 27 day of May 2011


BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR