

Mental Health Hospitalization Notification on to Governor

In a move to improve public safety, the House and Senate passed a bill to notify law enforcement of the release of individuals hospitalized for a serious mental impairment if there is an arrest warrant or pending charges.

The bill, Senate File 2352, streamlines the process to notify law enforcement and addresses gaps in the system to assure notification.

The bill clarifies that a law enforcement officer can request that any court order include a requirement that the law enforcement agency is notified when an individual hospitalized for a serious mental injury is discharged if there is an arrest warrant or pending charges for that individual.

In addition, the bill provides an administrative process for law enforcement to be notified if a court order has not yet been completed.

The bill was prompted by the shooting death of Ed Thomas, the Aplington-Parkersburg football coach, by Mark Becker. Becker was released from a Waterloo hospital with charges pending, but law enforcement was not notified. Becker drove from the hospital to Parkersburg and later fatally shot Thomas.

The bill now goes to the Governor for his signature.