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H.B. 837
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Russo and Brownlee

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SUMMARY

- Protects from release under Ohio Public Records Law the residential and familial information of mental health professionals and social workers.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Mental health professionals and social workers

The bill expands “designated public service worker” status to mental health professionals and social workers. The designation prohibits the release of the residential and familial information of these individuals as part of a public records request (see “**Protections**,” below).

Under Public Records Law, any person may request to inspect or obtain copies of public records from a public office. When it receives a public records request, and unless part or all of a record is exempt from release, a public office must provide inspection of the requested records promptly and at no cost, or provide copies at cost within a reasonable period of time.¹ The bill includes mental health professionals and social workers (see “**Definitions**,” below) within the definition of “designated public service worker” and as a result exempts the residential and familial information of these individuals from disclosure under the Public Records Law.²

Under current law, forensic mental health providers, mental health evaluation providers, and regional psychiatric hospital employees are included as designated public service workers. The bill includes these professions within an expanded definition of “mental health professionals,” which also includes certain advanced practice nurses, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists, and school psychologists.

¹ R.C. 149.43(B).

² R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(p) and (7).

Protections

Under continuing law, the designated public service worker's residential and familial information that is exempt from the Public Records Law includes the following:

- The address of the actual personal residence of a designated public service worker, except for the state or political subdivision in which a designated public service worker resides;
- Information compiled from referral to or participation in an employee assistance program;
- The Social Security number, the residential telephone number, any bank account, debit card, charge card, or credit card number, or the emergency telephone number of, or any medical information pertaining to, a designated public service worker;
- The name of any beneficiary of employment benefits, including, but not limited to, life insurance benefits, provided to a designated public service worker by the designated public service worker's employee;
- The identity and amount of any charitable or employment benefit deduction made by the designated public service worker's employer from the designated public service worker's compensation, unless the amount of the deduction is required by state or federal law;
- The name, residential address, the name of the employer, the address of the employer, the Social Security number, the residential telephone number, any bank account, debit card, charge card, or credit card number, or the emergency telephone number of the spouse, a former spouse, or any child of a designated public service worker.

Definitions

"Mental health professional" means all the following:

- Either of the following advanced practice registered nurses who holds a current, valid license issued under the Nurse Licensing Law that authorizes the practice of nursing as an advanced practice registered nurse:
 - A clinical nurse specialist who is certified as a psychiatric-mental health CNS by the American Nurses Credentialing Center;
 - A certified nurse practitioner who is certified as a psychiatric-mental health NP by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.
- A physician specializing in psychiatry;
- A psychologist, school psychologist, or independent school psychologist licensed under the Nurse Licensing Law or under rules adopted in accordance with Department of Education and Workforce Law;
- A forensic mental health provider;
- A mental health evaluation provider;
- A regional psychiatric hospital employee.

“Social worker” means an individual licensed to practice as an independent social worker, a social worker, a licensed professional clinical counselor, a licensed professional counselor, an independent marriage and family therapist, or a marriage and family therapist.³

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	04-30-26

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³ R.C. 149.43(A)(9).