

HOUSE BILL NO. 507

INTRODUCED BY G. PIERSON, J. ECK, R. MEHLHOFF, C. PEASE-LOPEZ, Z. PERRY, J. PRICE,  
R. SHAW, K. SWANSON, J. WELBORN, E. BUTTREY

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATING TO INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED  
MISTREATMENT, NEGLECT, OR ABUSE OF RESIDENTS AT A RESIDENTIAL FACILITY; CLARIFYING THE  
TIMEFRAME FOR INITIATING AN INVESTIGATION; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; AMENDING  
SECTION 53-20-163, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 53-20-163, MCA, is amended to read:

**"53-20-163. Abuse of residents prohibited.** (1) Any form of mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a  
resident is prohibited.

(2) A residential facility shall publish in each cottage and building and circulate to staff a written policy  
statement that defines the facility's requirements for reporting and investigating allegations of mistreatment,  
neglect, or abuse and injuries from an unknown source.

(3) Each allegation of mistreatment, neglect, or abuse and each injury from an unknown source must  
be reported immediately to the superintendent of the facility and to the department of justice, and the residential  
facility shall maintain a written record that:

(a) each allegation and each injury from an unknown source has been reported to the department of  
justice;

(b) each allegation and each injury from an unknown source has been thoroughly investigated and  
findings stated;

(c) the investigation into the allegation or injury from an unknown source was initiated ~~within 24 hours~~  
on the next business day following the report of the incident; and

(d) the results were reported to the director of the department of public health and human services.

(4) The residential facility shall report the details of each reported allegation, including providing the  
written record created pursuant to this section, to the mental disabilities board of visitors and the state protection  
and advocacy program for individuals with developmental disabilities, as authorized by 42 U.S.C. 15043(a)(2),



1 within 5 business days of the incident. The residential facility may not redact any information that is provided  
2 pursuant to this subsection. The mental disabilities board of visitors and the state protection and advocacy  
3 program shall maintain the confidentiality of any report received under this section to the same extent that the  
4 reports are confidential under state and federal laws applicable to the residential facility.

5 (5) Upon receiving a report of an allegation of mistreatment, neglect, or abuse or of an injury from an  
6 unknown source, the department of justice shall conduct a thorough investigation of each allegation or each injury  
7 from an unknown source and provide a written report of its investigation and findings to the superintendent of the  
8 residential facility within 5 business days of the incident.

9 (6) The residential facility shall provide the department of justice with access to records and other  
10 information necessary to conduct investigations under this section. The department of justice shall maintain the  
11 confidentiality of any information received in the course of conducting investigations under this section to the  
12 same extent that the information is confidential under state and federal laws applicable to the residential facility.

13 (7) If a state licensing authority or federal medicaid certification authority issues a statement of deficiency  
14 indicating that the residential facility has failed to meet licensing or certification standards due to the thoroughness  
15 or timeliness of an investigation conducted under this section, the department of justice shall participate in  
16 preparing a plan of correction to restore the residential facility's compliance with licensing or certification  
17 standards.

18 (8) If in the course of conducting an investigation under this section the department of justice develops  
19 reasonable cause to believe that a criminal offense has occurred, the department of justice shall refer the matter  
20 to the appropriate local law enforcement agency.

21 (9) The department of justice may adopt rules to implement this section."

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23 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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