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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5461**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation (originally sponsored by Senators Cleveland, Darneille, and Wilson, C.)

AN ACT Relating to the sharing of information between participants in multidisciplinary coordination of child sexual abuse investigations; amending RCW 13.50.010 and 26.44.180; and adding a new section to chapter 26.44 RCW.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 13.50.010 and 2018 c 58 s 78 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) For purposes of this chapter:

(a) "Good faith effort to pay" means a juvenile offender has either (i) paid the principal amount in full; (ii) made at least eighty percent of the value of full monthly payments within the period from disposition or deferred disposition until the time the amount of restitution owed is under review; or (iii) can show good cause why he or she paid an amount less than eighty percent of the value of full monthly payments;

(b) "Juvenile justice or care agency" means any of the following: Police, diversion units, court, prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, detention center, attorney general, the oversight board for children, youth, and families, the office of the family and children's ombuds, the department of social and health services and its contracting agencies, the department of children, youth, and families and its contracting agencies, schools; persons or public or private agencies having children committed to their custody; and any placement oversight committee created under RCW 72.05.415;

(c) "Official juvenile court file" means the legal file of the juvenile court containing the petition or information, motions, memorandums, briefs, notices of hearing or appearance, service documents, witness and exhibit lists, findings of the court and court orders, agreements, judgments, decrees, notices of appeal, as well as documents prepared by the clerk, including court minutes, letters, warrants, waivers, affidavits, declarations, invoices, and the index to clerk papers;

(d) "Records" means the official juvenile court file, the social file, and records of any other juvenile justice or care agency in the case;

(e) "Social file" means the juvenile court file containing the records and reports of the probation counselor.

(2) Each petition or information filed with the court may include only one juvenile and each petition or information shall be filed under a separate docket number. The social file shall be filed separately from the official juvenile court file.

(3) It is the duty of any juvenile justice or care agency to maintain accurate records. To this end:

(a) The agency may never knowingly record inaccurate information. Any information in records maintained by the department of social and health services or the department of children, youth, and families relating to a petition filed pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW that is found by the court to be false or inaccurate shall be corrected or expunged from such records by the agency;

(b) An agency shall take reasonable steps to assure the security of its records and prevent tampering with them; and

(c) An agency shall make reasonable efforts to insure the completeness of its records, including action taken by other agencies with respect to matters in its files.

(4) Each juvenile justice or care agency shall implement procedures consistent with the provisions of this chapter to facilitate inquiries concerning records.

(5) Any person who has reasonable cause to believe information concerning that person is included in the records of a juvenile justice or care agency and who has been denied access to those records by the agency may make a motion to the court for an order authorizing that person to inspect the juvenile justice or care agency record concerning that person. The court shall grant the motion to examine records unless it finds that in the interests of justice or in the best interests of the juvenile the records or parts of them should remain confidential.

(6) A juvenile, or his or her parents, or any person who has reasonable cause to believe information concerning that person is included in the records of a juvenile justice or care agency may make a motion to the court challenging the accuracy of any information concerning the moving party in the record or challenging the continued possession of the record by the agency. If the court grants the motion, it shall order the record or information to be corrected or destroyed.

(7) The person making a motion under subsection (5) or (6) of this section shall give reasonable notice of the motion to all parties to the original action and to any agency whose records will be affected by the motion.

(8) The court may permit inspection of records by, or release of information to, any clinic, hospital, or agency which has the subject person under care or treatment. The court may also permit inspection by or release to individuals or agencies, including juvenile justice advisory committees of county law and justice councils, engaged in legitimate research for educational, scientific, or public purposes. Each person granted permission to inspect juvenile justice or care agency records for research purposes shall present a notarized statement to the court stating that the names of juveniles and parents will remain confidential.

(9) The court shall release to the caseload forecast council the records needed for its research and data-gathering functions. Access to caseload forecast data may be permitted by the council for research purposes only if the anonymity of all persons mentioned in the records or information will be preserved.

(10) Juvenile detention facilities shall release records to the caseload forecast council upon request. The commission shall not disclose the names of any juveniles or parents mentioned in the records without the named individual's written permission.

(11) Requirements in this chapter relating to the court's authority to compel disclosure shall not apply to the oversight board for children, youth, and families or the office of the family and children's ombuds.

(12) For the purpose of research only, the administrative office of the courts shall maintain an electronic research copy of all records in the judicial information system related to juveniles. Access to the research copy is restricted to the administrative office of the courts for research purposes as authorized by the supreme court or by state statute. The administrative office of the courts shall maintain the confidentiality of all confidential records and shall preserve the anonymity of all persons identified in the research copy. Data contained in the research copy may be shared with other governmental agencies as authorized by state statute, pursuant to data-sharing and research agreements, and consistent with applicable security and confidentiality requirements. The research copy may not be subject to any records retention schedule and must include records destroyed or removed from the judicial information system pursuant to RCW 13.50.270 and 13.50.100(3).

(13) The court shall release to the Washington state office of public defense records needed to implement the agency's oversight, technical assistance, and other functions as required by RCW 2.70.020. Access to the records used as a basis for oversight, technical assistance, or other agency functions is restricted to the Washington state office of public defense. The Washington state office of public defense shall maintain the confidentiality of all confidential information included in the records.

(14) The court shall release to the Washington state office of civil legal aid records needed to implement the agency's oversight, technical assistance, and other functions as required by RCW 2.53.045. Access to the records used as a basis for oversight, technical assistance, or other agency functions is restricted to the Washington state office of civil legal aid. The Washington state office of civil legal aid shall maintain the confidentiality of all confidential information included in the records, and shall, as soon as possible, destroy any retained notes or records obtained under this section that are not necessary for its functions related to RCW 2.53.045.

(15) For purposes of providing for the educational success of youth in foster care, the department of children, youth, and families may disclose only those confidential child welfare records that pertain to or may assist with meeting the educational needs of foster youth to another state agency or state agency's contracted provider responsible under state law or contract for assisting foster youth to attain educational success. The records retain their confidentiality pursuant to this chapter and federal law and cannot be further disclosed except as allowed under this chapter and federal law.

(16) For the purpose of ensuring the safety and welfare of the youth who are in foster care, the department of children, youth, and families may disclose to the department of commerce and its contracted providers responsible under state law or contract for providing services to youth, only those confidential child welfare records that pertain to ensuring the safety and welfare of the youth who are in foster care who are admitted to crisis residential centers or HOPE centers under contract with the office of homeless youth prevention and protection. Records disclosed under this subsection retain their confidentiality pursuant to this chapter and federal law and may not be further disclosed except as permitted by this chapter and federal law.

(17) For purposes of investigating and preventing child abuse and neglect, and providing for the health care coordination and the well-being of children in foster care, the department of children, youth, and families may disclose only those confidential child welfare records that pertain to or may assist with investigation and prevention of child abuse and neglect, or may assist with providing for the health and well-being of children in foster care to the department of social and health services, the health care authority, or their contracting agencies. For purposes of investigating and preventing child abuse and neglect, and to provide for the coordination of health care and the well-being of children in foster care, the department of social and health services and the health care authority may disclose only those confidential child welfare records that pertain to or may assist with investigation and prevention of child abuse and neglect, or may assist with providing for the health care coordination and the well-being of children in foster care to the department of children, youth, and families, or its contracting agencies. The records retain their confidentiality pursuant to this chapter and federal law and cannot be further disclosed except as allowed under this chapter and federal law.

(18) For the purpose of investigating child sexual abuse, online sexual exploitation and commercial sexual exploitation of minors, and child fatality, child physical abuse, and criminal neglect cases for the well-being of the child, the department of children, youth, and families may disclose only those confidential child welfare records that pertain to or may assist with such an investigation pursuant to RCW 26.44.180 and section 3 of this act. The records retain their confidentiality pursuant to this chapter and federal law and cannot be further disclosed except as allowed under this chapter and federal law.

**Sec.**  RCW 26.44.180 and 2010 c 176 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Each agency involved in investigating child sexual abuse, online sexual exploitation and commercial sexual exploitation of minors, as well as investigations of child fatality, child physical abuse, and criminal child neglect cases, shall document its role in handling cases and how it will coordinate with other local agencies or systems and shall adopt a local protocol based on the state guidelines. The department and local law enforcement agencies may include other agencies and systems that are involved with child sexual abuse victims in the multidisciplinary coordination.

(2)(a) Each county shall develop a written protocol for handling investigations of criminal child sexual abuse ((~~investigations~~)), online sexual exploitation and commercial sexual exploitation of minors, and child fatality, child physical abuse, and criminal child neglect cases. The protocol shall address the coordination of ((~~child sexual abuse~~)) such criminal investigations ((~~between~~)) among multidisciplinary child protection team members, identified as representatives from the prosecutor's office, law enforcement, children's protective services, children's advocacy centers((~~,~~)) where available, local advocacy groups, community sexual assault programs((~~,~~)) as defined in RCW 70.125.030, licensed physical and mental health practitioners that are involved with child sexual abuse victims, and any other local agency involved in ((~~the~~)) such criminal investigations ((~~of child sexual abuse~~)), including those investigations involving multiple victims and multiple offenders. The protocol shall be developed by the prosecuting attorney with the assistance of the agencies referenced in this subsection.

(b) County protocol for handling investigations of online sexual exploitation and commercial sexual exploitation of minors must be implemented by July 1, 2021.

(3) Local protocols under this section shall be adopted and in place by July 1, 2000, and shall be submitted to the legislature prior to that date. Beginning on the effective date of this section, local protocols under subsection (1) of this section must be reviewed every two years to determine whether modifications are needed.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 26.44 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The legislature finds that the purpose of multidisciplinary child protection teams as described in RCW 26.44.180 (1) and (2) is to ensure the protection and well-being of the child and to advance and coordinate the prompt investigation of suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to reduce the trauma of any child victim.

(2)(a) When a case as described in RCW 26.44.180 (1) or (2) is referred to the team, records pertaining to the case must be made available to team members. Any member of the team may use or disclose records made available by the team members under this subsection only as necessary for the performance of the member's duties as a member of the multidisciplinary child protection team.

(b) Team members may share information about criminal child abuse investigations and case planning following such investigations with other participants in the multidisciplinary coordination to the extent necessary to protect a child from abuse or neglect. This section is not intended to permit, direct, or compel team members to share information if sharing would constitute a violation of their professional ethical obligations or disclose privileged communications as described in RCW 5.60.060, or if sharing is otherwise impermissible under chapter 13.50 RCW or other applicable statutes.

(3)(a) Every member of the multidisciplinary child protection team who receives information or records regarding children and families in his or her capacity as a member of the team is subject to the same privacy and confidentiality obligations and confidentiality penalties as the person disclosing or providing the information or records. The information or records obtained by any team member must be maintained in a manner that ensures the maximum protection of privacy and confidentiality rights.

(b) Multidisciplinary child protection team members must execute a confidentiality agreement every year.

(c) This section must not be construed to restrict guarantees of confidentiality provided under state or federal law.

(4) As convened by the county prosecutor, or his or her designee, a multidisciplinary child protection team should meet regularly, at least monthly, unless the needs and resources of each team dictate less frequent meetings. Team meetings are closed to the public and are not subject to chapter 42.30 RCW.

(5) Information and records communicated or provided to the multidisciplinary child protection team members by all providers and agencies, as well as information and records created in the course of a child abuse or neglect case investigation, are deemed private and confidential and are protected from discovery and disclosure by all applicable statutory and common law protections. Existing civil and criminal penalties apply to the inappropriate disclosure of information held by team members. To the extent that the records communicated or provided are confidential under RCW 13.50.100, these records may only be further released as authorized by RCW 13.50.100 or other applicable law.

(6) Any person who presented information before the multidisciplinary child protection team or who is a team member may testify as to matters within the person's knowledge. However, in a civil or criminal proceeding, such person or team member may not be questioned about opinions formed as a result of the case consultation meetings.

(7) Any multidisciplinary child protection team member whose action in facilitating the exchange and sharing of information in serving any child in the course of the member's profession, specialties, interests, or occupation, for the purpose of ensuring the safety of the child and the community and providing early intervention to avert more serious problems, is immune from any civil liability arising out of any good faith act relevant to participation on the team that might otherwise be incurred or imposed under this section. In a proceeding regarding immunity from liability, there is a rebuttable presumption of good faith.

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