

SB 5444 - DIGEST

Recognizes that: (1) There has been a nationwide increase of individuals with behavioral health disorders in the criminal justice system; and

(2) Reforms must be made to behavioral health systems and services to meet the increasing demands.

Authorizes a court to appoint an impartial forensic navigator approved by the department of social and health services to assist individuals who are referred for competency evaluation or restoration to navigate the forensic legal process and access available behavioral health resources.

Requires the forensic navigator to: (1) Investigate and collect relevant information about an individual and report the information to the court;

(2) Meet with, interview, or observe the individual; and

(3) Monitor court orders for compliance and bring to the court's attention any change in circumstances.

Requires the court, when ordering a defendant to undergo outpatient restoration, to set appropriate conditions of release and enforce those conditions.

Prohibits the court from issuing an order to undergo outpatient competency restoration unless there is an outpatient restoration program that is available and has adequate space for the person.