

Excerpt from California Welfare and Institutions Code Division 9, Part 2, Chapter 5

830. Child abuse; disclosure of information and writings among members of multidisciplinary personnel team; definitions

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, members of a multidisciplinary personnel team engaged in the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse may disclose and exchange information and writings to and with one another relating to any incidents of child abuse that may also be a part of a juvenile court record or otherwise designated as confidential under state law if the member of the team having that information or writing reasonably believes it is generally relevant to the prevention, identification, or treatment of child abuse. All discussions relative to the disclosure or exchange of any such information or writings during team meetings are confidential and, notwithstanding any other provision of law, testimony concerning any such discussion is not admissible in any criminal, civil, or juvenile court proceeding.

As used in this section, "child abuse" has the same meaning as defined in Section 18951.

As used in this section, "multidisciplinary personnel team" means any team of three or more persons, as specified in Section 18951, the members of which are trained in the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and are qualified to provide a broad range of services related to child abuse.

§ 10850. Confidentiality; rules and regulations; violations; disclosure of confidential information regarding criminal act

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, all applications and records concerning any individual made or kept by any public officer or agency in connection with the administration of any provision of this code relating to any form of public social services for which grants-in-aid are received by this state from the United States government shall be confidential, and shall not be open to examination for any purpose not directly connected with the administration of that program, or any investigation, prosecution, or criminal or civil proceeding conducted in connection with the administration of any such program. The disclosure of any information which identifies by name or address any applicant for or recipient of these grants-in-aid to any committee or legislative body is prohibited, except as provided in subdivision (b).

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this section, no person shall publish or disclose or permit or cause to be published or disclosed any list of persons receiving public social services. Any county welfare department in this state may release lists of applicants for, or recipients of, public social services, to any other county welfare department or the State Department of Social Services, and these lists or any other records shall be released when requested by any county welfare department or the State Department of Social Services. These lists or other records shall only be used for purposes directly connected with the administration of public social services. Except for those purposes, no person shall publish, disclose, or use or permit or cause to be published, disclosed, or used any confidential information pertaining to an applicant or recipient.

Any county welfare department and the State Department of Social Services shall provide any governmental entity which is authorized by law to conduct an audit or similar activity in connection with the administration of public social services, including any committee or legislative body so authorized, with access to any public social service applications and records described in subdivision (a) to the extent of the

authorization. Those committees, legislative bodies and other entities may only request or use these records for the purpose of investigating the administration of public social services, and shall not disclose the identity of any applicant or recipient except in the case of a criminal or civil proceeding conducted in connection with the administration of public social services.

However, this section shall not prohibit the furnishing of this information to other public agencies to the extent required for verifying eligibility or for other purposes directly connected with the administration of public social services, or to county superintendents of schools or superintendents of school districts only as necessary for the administration of federally assisted programs providing assistance in cash or in-kind or services directly to individuals on the basis of need. Any person knowingly and intentionally violating this subdivision is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Further, in the context of a petition for the appointment of a conservator for a person who is receiving or has received aid from a public agency, as indicated above, or in the context of a criminal prosecution for a violation of Section 368 of the Penal Code both of the following shall apply:

(1) An Adult Protective Services employee or Ombudsman may answer truthfully at any proceeding related to the petition or prosecution, when asked if he or she is aware of information that he or she believes is related to the legal mental capacity of that aid recipient or the need for a conservatorship for that aid recipient. If the Adult Protective Services employee or Ombudsman states that he or she is aware of such information, the court may order the Adult Protective Services employee or Ombudsman to testify about his or her observations and to disclose all relevant agency records.

(2) The court may order the Adult Protective Services employee or Ombudsman to testify about his or her observations and to disclose any relevant agency records if the court has other independent reason to believe that the Adult Protective Services employee or Ombudsman has information that would facilitate the resolution of the matter.

(c) The State Department of Social Services may make rules and regulations governing the custody, use, and preservation of all records, papers, files, and communications pertaining to the administration of the laws relating to public social services under their jurisdiction. The rules and regulations shall be binding on all departments, officials and employees of the state, or of any political subdivision of the state and may provide for giving information to or exchanging information with agencies, public or political subdivisions of the state, and may provide for giving information to or exchanging information with agencies, public or private, which are engaged in planning, providing or securing social services for or in behalf of recipients or applicants; and for making case records available for research purposes, provided, that the research will not result in the disclosure of the identity of applicants for or recipients of public social services.

(d) Any person, including every public officer and employee, who knowingly secures or possesses, other than in the course of official duty, an official list or a list compiled from official sources, published or disclosed in violation of this section, of persons who have applied for or who have been granted any form of public social services for which state or federal funds are made available to the counties is guilty of a misdemeanor.

(e) This section shall not be construed to prohibit an employee of a county welfare department from disclosing confidential information concerning a public social services applicant or recipient to a state or local law enforcement agency investigating or

gathering information regarding a criminal act committed in a welfare department office, a criminal act against any county or state welfare worker, or any criminal act witnessed by any county or state welfare worker while involved in the administration of public social services at any location. Further, this section shall not be construed to prohibit an employee of a county welfare department from disclosing confidential information concerning a public social services applicant or recipient to a state or local law enforcement agency investigating or gathering information regarding a criminal act intentionally committed by the applicant or recipient against any off-duty county or state welfare worker in retaliation for an act performed in the course of the welfare worker's duty when the person committing the offense knows or reasonably should know that the victim is a state or county welfare worker. These criminal acts shall include only those which are in violation of state or local law. Disclosure of confidential information pursuant to this subdivision shall be limited to the applicant's or recipient's name, physical description, and address.

(f) The provisions of this section shall be operative only to the extent permitted by federal law and shall not apply to, but exclude, Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) of this division, entitled "Basic Health Care", and for which a grant-in-aid is received by the state under Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

§ 10850.1. Child abuse or elder or dependent persons abuse; disclosure of information or writing among members of multidisciplinary personnel teams; definitions.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for purposes of Section 10850, the activities of a multidisciplinary personnel team engaged in the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse, or the abuse of elder or dependent persons are activities performed in the administration of public social services, and a member of the team may disclose and exchange information or writing that also is kept or maintained in connection with any program of public social services or otherwise designated as confidential under state law which he or she reasonably believes is relevant to the prevention, identification, or treatment of child abuse or the abuse of elder or dependent persons to other members of the team. All discussions relative to the disclosure or exchange of any such information or writing during team meetings are confidential and, notwithstanding any other provision of law, testimony concerning any such discussion is not admissible in any criminal, civil, or juvenile court proceeding.

As used in this section, "child abuse" has the same meaning as defined in Section 18951.

As used in this section, "abuse of elder or dependent persons: has the meaning given in Section 15610.

As used in this section, "multidisciplinary personnel team" means any team of three or more persons, as specified in Section 15715.1 or 18951, the members of which are trained in the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse or the abuse of elder or dependent persons and are qualified to provide a broad range of services related to child abuse or the abuse of elder or dependent persons.

§ 18951. Definitions

As used in this chapter:

(a) "Child" means an individual under the age of 18.

(b) "Child services" means services for or on behalf of children which shall include, but

not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Protective services.
- (2) Caretaker services.
- (3) Day care services which include drop-off care.
- (4) Homemaker services or family aides.
- (5) Counseling services.

(c) "Adult services" means services for or on behalf of a parent of a child which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) Access to voluntary placement, long or short term.
- (2) Counseling services before and after a crisis.
- (3) Homemaker services or family aides.

(d) "Multidisciplinary personnel" means any team of three or more persons who are trained in the prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect cases and who are qualified to provide a broad range of services related to child abuse. The team may include but not be limited to:

- (1) Psychiatrists, psychologists or other trained counseling personnel.
- (2) Police officers or other law enforcement agents.
- (3) Medical personnel with sufficient training to provide health services.
- (4) Social workers with experience or training in child abuse prevention.
- (5) Any public or private school teacher, administrative officer, supervisor of child welfare and attendance, or certificated pupil personnel employee.

(e) "Child abuse" as used in this chapter means a situation in which a child suffers from any one or more of the following:

- (1) Serious physical injury inflicted upon the child by other than accidental means.
- (2) Harm by reason of intentional neglect or malnutrition or sexual abuse.
- (3) Going without necessary and basic physical care.
- (4) Willful mental injury, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby, as determined in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Director of Social Services.

(5) Any condition which results in the violation of the rights or physical, mental, or moral welfare of a child or jeopardizes the child's present or future health, opportunity for normal development or capacity for independence.

(f) "Parent" means any person who exercises care, custody and control of the child as established by law.

§ 18986.40. Integrated children's services programs; children's multidisciplinary services team; crisis intervention services

(a) For the purposes of this chapter, "program" or "integrated children's services programs" means a coordinated children's service system, operating as a program that is part of a department or State Department of Mental Health initiative, that offers a full range of integrated behavioral social, health, and mental health services, to seriously emotionally disturbed and special needs children, or programs established by county governments, local education agencies, or consortia of public and private agencies, to jointly provide two or more of the following services to children or their families, or both:

- (1) Educational services for children at risk of dropping out, or who need additional educational services to be successful academically.
- (2) Health care.
- (3) All mental health diagnostic treatment services, including medication.
- (4) Substance abuse prevention and treatment.
- (5) Child abuse prevention, identification, and treatment.
- (6) Nutrition services.
- (7) Child care and development services.
- (8) Juvenile justice services.
- (9) Child welfare services.
- (10) Early intervention and prevention services.
- (11) Crisis intervention services, as defined in subdivision (c).
- (12) Any other service which will enhance the health, development, and well-being of children and their families.

(b) For the purposes of this chapter, "children's multidisciplinary services team" means a team of two or more persons trained and qualified to provide one or more of the services listed in subdivision (a), who are responsible in the program for identifying the educational, health, or social service needs of a child and his or her family, and for developing a plan to address those needs. A family member, or the designee of a family member, shall be invited to participate in team meetings and decisions, unless the team determines that, in its professional judgment, this participation would present a reasonable risk of a significant adverse or detrimental effect on the minor's psychological or physical safety. Members of the team shall be trained in the

confidentiality and information sharing provisions of this chapter.

(c) "Crisis intervention services" means early support and psychological assistance, to be continued as necessary, to children who have been victims of, or whose lives have been affected by, a violent crime or a cataclysmic incident, such as a natural disaster, or who have been involved in school, neighborhood, or family based critical incidents likely to cause profound psychological effects if not addressed immediately and thoroughly.

§ 18986.46. Disclosure of information and records; children's multidisciplinary services teams; construction of section

(a) A program shall utilize children's multidisciplinary services teams, as defined in this chapter.

(b) A team member shall provide program services only as employed by, under contract with, or otherwise affiliated with, the program, and shall not share information, or provide program services, when acting as a separate local, state, or private agency or entity.

(c) A program shall be considered a single program for purposes of federal substance abuse program regulations contained in Part 2 (commencing with Section 2.1) of Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law regarding disclosure of information and records, a program shall be permitted to establish a unified services record for a child and family. That record shall contain all records of prior services that are released to the program and that are relevant and necessary to formulate an integrated services plan, pursuant to valid written authorizations, as well as a record of all service provided under the program.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of law regarding disclosure of information and records, when a child enters the program a parent, guardian, judicial office with jurisdiction over the minor, or a minor with legal power to consent, shall be asked to sign a single authorization that gives a knowing and informed consent, in writing, and that complies with all other applicable provisions of state law governing release of medical, mental health, social service, and educational records, and that covers multiple service providers, in order to permit the release of records to the program. This single authorization shall not include adoption records. The authorized representative of the child, or the child in a case where he or she has the legal right to consent, shall be fully apprised of the requirements of this subdivision prior to participation in the program. Before information may be exchanged about a particular child or family pursuant to this chapter, a representative of the program shall do all of the following:

(1) Explain to the authorized representative of the child, or the child in a case where he or she has the legal right to consent, both of the following, and this explanation shall be given before any information about the child or family is recorded and before any services are provided:

(A) Information provided by the child or family may only be exchanged within the program with the express written consent of the authorized representative.

(B) Information shall not be disclosed to anyone other than members of the multidisciplinary children's services team, and those qualified to

receive information as explained in subdivision (i).

(2) The authorized representative of the child, or the child in a case where he or she has the legal right to consent, shall be informed that he or she has a right to refuse to sign, or to limit the scope of, the consent form, and that a refusal to sign, or to limit the scope of, the consent form will not have an adverse impact on the client's eligibility for services under the programs described in this chapter.

(f) The knowing and informed consent given pursuant to this chapter shall only be in force for the time that the child or family is a client of the program.

(g)(1) Notwithstanding any provision of state law governing the disclosure of information and records, persons who are trained, qualified, and assigned by their respective agencies to serve on teams within a program and other team members included pursuant to this chapter may view relevant sections of unified program records and may disclose to one another relevant information and view records on a child or the child's family as necessary to formulate an integrated services plan or to deliver services to children and their families.

(2) This information and records may include information relevant to the evaluation of the child and his or her family, the development of a treatment plan for the child and his or her family, and the delivery of services. Relevant information and records shall be shared with family members or family designees on the team, except information or records, if any, disclosure of which the team determines would present a reasonable risk of a significant adverse or detrimental effect on the minor's psychological or physical safety.

(h)(1) If the members of a multidisciplinary services team within an integrated children's services program require records held by other team members, copies may be provided to them.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law regarding disclosure of information and records, a program may establish and maintain a common data base for the purpose of delivering services under the program. The data base may contain demographic data and may identify the services recommended for, and provided to, a child and his or her family by the program. The data base shall be for use and disclosure only within the program, except by properly authorized consent by a parent, guardian, judicial officer with jurisdiction over the child, or a minor with the legal power to consent.

(3) The program may authorize use of information contained in the data base for bona fide evaluation and research purposes, unless otherwise prohibited by law. No information disclosed under this paragraph shall permit identification of the individual patient or client. The release of copies of mental health records, physical health records, and drug or alcohol records in programs establishing a unified services record shall be governed by the single authorization of informed and knowing consent to release these records. In programs not establishing a unified services record and not utilizing the single authorization of informed and knowing consent, release of these records may take place only after the team has received a form permitting release of records on the child or the child's family, signed by the child, to the extent the records were generated as a result of health care services to which the child has the power to consent under state law, or, to the extent that the records have not been generated by the provision of these health care services, by the child's parent, guardian, or legal representative, including the court which has jurisdiction over those children who are wards or dependents of the court.

(i) The multidisciplinary team may designate persons qualified pursuant to Section 18986.40 to be a member of the team for a particular case. A person designated as a team member pursuant to this subdivision may receive and disclose relevant information and records, subject to the confidentiality provisions of subdivision (k).

(j) The sharing of information permitted under subdivision (g) shall be governed by memoranda of understanding among the participating service providers or agencies in the coordinated children's service system or program. These memoranda shall specify the types of information that may be shared without a signed release form, in accordance with subdivision (e), and the process to be used to ensure that current confidentiality requirements, as described in subdivision (k), are met. This paragraph shall not be construed to waive any right of privilege contained in the Evidence Code, except in compliance with Section 912 of that code.

(k) Every member of the children's multidisciplinary services team who receives information or records on children and families served in the integrated children's services program shall be under the same privacy and confidentiality obligations and subject to the same confidentiality penalties as the person disclosing or providing the information or records. The information or records obtained shall be maintained in a manner that ensures the maximum protection of privacy and confidentiality rights.

(l) This section shall not be construed to restrict guarantees of confidentiality provided under federal law.

(m) Information and records communicated or provided to the program, by all providers, programs, and agencies, as well as information and records created by the program in the course of serving its children and their families, shall be deemed private and confidential and shall be protected from discovery and disclosure by all applicable statutory and common law protections. Civil and criminal penalties shall apply to the inappropriate disclosure of information held by the program. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the authority of a health care provider to disclose medical information pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 56.10 of the Civil Code.

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