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Feigenholtz Mental Health Legislation Clears Hurdle

House Bill 1017 allows for real-time electronic health record sharing through the Illinois Health Information Exchange by using a secure, closed network of patient information.

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Local representatives are hoping to improve services and communication for mental health patients and those who are developmentally disabled.

A measure to do just that, which was sponsored by local state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago), recently passed out of the Illinois House and now advances to the Senate for further consideration.

“Electronic records allow providers to be more efficient at coordinating patient care and help avoid making mistakes in diagnosing illnesses and prescribing treatments,” Feigenholtz said, in a news release. “With one-third of Illinoisans facing a behavioral health issue, this improved communication is incredibly crucial. This measure is a strong step in the right direction to improving care for those in need.”

House Bill 1017 allows for real-time electronic health record sharing through the Illinois Health Information Exchange by using a secure, closed network of patient information stored electronically and available to certain health care providers. In line with federal and state health care confidentiality laws and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the measure will also allow patients the right to opt-out of having their health information disclosed to their providers.

“This legislation strikes the balance between protecting privacy and the need to improve care coordination to achieve the best health outcomes,” Feigenholtz said. “My colleagues in the House overwhelmingly understand the need to take Illinois to the next level of quality patient care. I am hopeful that the Senate will do the same.”

For more information, contact Feigenholtz’s constituent services office at (773) 296-4141 or sara@staterepsara.com.