

March 2, 2026

DMHAS Legislative Newsletter

Greetings to DMHAS Staff and Partners!

We hope you’ve been able to enjoy some of the recent warmer weather! Although winter tried to slow things down, the legislature kept moving forward. Our newsletter is arriving a bit later than usual but below is a recap of the latest activity and key developments.

DMHAS Agency Proposals

In our last newsletter, we talked about how legislative committees have until the end of the week to “raise concepts” or vote to draft bills in order for a proposal to move forward in the legislative process. On February 20th, the Public Health Committee raised both of our proposals. This year we have two proposals:

Proposal #1: *An Act Concerning Recovery Friendly Language and Various Revisions to Mental Health and Addiction Statutes*

Proposal #2: *An Act Expanding Access to Opioid Overdose Reversal Medication*

The chart below provides a high-level overview of what each proposal includes:

<p>AAC Recovery Friendly Language and Various Revisions to Mental Health and Addiction Statutes</p>	<p>An Act Expanding Access to Opioid Overdose Reversal Medication</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting person-centered, recovery-friendly language • Adds DMHAS to list of agencies DESPP coordinates with for deployment of behavioral health professionals in certain emergency situations • Updates state facility advisory council language to reflect current practice • Repeals outdated references and makes minor changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes barriers to access for opioid antagonists by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ updating education statutes to conform with changes in FDA designations ◦ clearly allowing distribution of over-the-counter (OTC) opioid antagonists by state agencies and other organizations ◦ exempting free distribution from the nonlegend drug permit requirement

DMHAS Agency Proposals Cont.

To read more about our legislative proposals, please visit our [webpage](#). We will keep you updated as to when our agency bills are scheduled for a public hearing.

DMHAS' Budget Presentation to the Appropriations Committee



On Monday, February 23rd, Commissioner Navarretta went in front of the Appropriations Committee to [testify](#) on the Governor's FY 2027 Midterm Budget Proposal. Following the budget presentation, a public hearing was held where members of the public came out to [testify](#) regarding their support, opposition, or requested changes, to the Appropriations Committee.

In addition to DMHAS, the Departments of Developmental Services (DDS) and Public Health (DPH) were included in the public hearing, as their budget presentations were the same day.

After budget presentations, agencies can be invited to a *work session*, which is led by co-chairs of the [assigned agency's subcommittee](#). For DMHAS, we appeared in front of the Health Subcommittee on Wednesday, February 25th to provide [responses](#) to questions asked during our budget presentation.



Did You Know?

The "*emergency certification*" process bypasses the typical legislative process. This procedure allows the speaker and president pro tempore to jointly propose a bill and send it directly to the House or Senate floor for action without any committee referrals or public hearings.

Session Updates

In addition to the rush of budget presentations, the Senate and House came into session last week on Wednesday and Thursday, respectively, to pass two emergency certified bills, neither of which impacted DMHAS operations:

[SB 298](#), *An Act Concerning the Reallocation of Certain State Funds and Various Provisions Relating to Education, Public Safety, General Government, Elections, Intermediate Care Facilities, and Warehouse Distribution Centers*. This bill contained multiple unrelated provisions. View the [plain language summary](#) and [fiscal note](#) to get a sense of the different changes and how they impacted state government.

[SB 299](#), *An Act Concerning Redemption of Out-of-State Beverage Containers*. This bill makes several changes to the state’s “bottle bill” which you can read more about in the [plain language summary](#) and [fiscal note](#).

The bills now move on to consideration for the Governor’s signature.

Other Items of Note

The General Law Committee held a public hearing on Governor’s Bill [HB 5038](#), *An Act Prohibiting Prediction Market Platforms from Allowing Use by of Advertising to Consumers Under the Age of Twenty-One*. The Governor has a [fact sheet](#) on this bill and DMHAS provided [testimony](#) in support of this concept.

The Public Health Committee held its first meeting to vote out bills today, March 2nd.

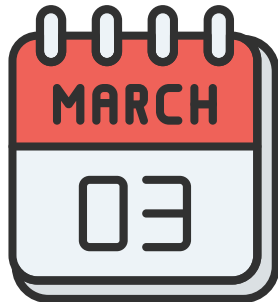


The Transportation Committee also is holding its rescheduled public hearing today on [HB 5235](#), *An Act Concerning a Plan and Coordinated Response to Persons Experiencing Homelessness on Property Under the Control of the Department of Transportation (DOT)*, among other bills. You can see DMHAS’ [testimony](#) on our current collaborations with DOT, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, and the Department of Housing, in this space.

What's Happening Next?

Committees continue to hold public hearings and committee meetings – and even vote to pass bills out of committee! To see what's taking place this upcoming week, then please visit the [CGA website](#).

A few things to highlight:



- **The Housing Committee** is holding a [public hearing](#) on several bills relating to focused on rental practices, protections for tenants and landlords, and efforts to expand affordable housing options.
- **The Human Services Committee** is holding a public hearing on, among other bills, [Governor's Bill SB 87](#), which creates a new Nonprofit Provider Advisory Board within the Office of Policy and Management. DMHAS is a member of this new board that will advise OPM and the Governor's Office on a number of different issues relating to access, service delivery, data collection, and sustainability.
- **The General Law Committee** is holding a [public hearing](#) on, among other issues, state oversight of gaming and regulated products such as cannabis, alcohol, and tobacco.

- **The Public Health Committee** is holding a public hearing on, among other bills, [SB 364](#), *An Act Concerning Extreme Weather Protocols*, which seeks to codify current practice into statute and [SB 365](#), *An Act Establishing a Bridge Program for Emergency Treatment and Recovery Navigation for Persons with an Opioid Use Disorder*, which requires every licensed hospital to administer buprenorphine to patients presenting in the ED with symptoms of OUD without requiring admission, among other requirements .



- On Friday, March 6th, the application to extend Connecticut's Substance Use Disorder Demonstration, including all pending amendments, will be reviewed by the **Appropriations and Human Services Committee**.