

HOUSE BILL NO. 2437

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions

on \_\_\_\_\_)

(Patron Prior to Substitute--Delegate Roem)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 51.5-150, 64.2-2019, and 64.2-2020 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services; training; powers and duties of guardian; annual reports by guardians; information required.

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 51.5-150, 64.2-2019, and 64.2-2020 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 51.5-150. Powers and duties of the Department with respect to the public guardian and conservator program and other guardians appointed pursuant to Chapter 20 (§ 64.2-2000 et seq.) of Title 64.2.**

A. The Department shall fund from appropriations received for such purpose a statewide system of local or regional public guardian and conservator programs.

B. The Department shall, with respect to the public guardian and conservator programs:

1. Make and enter into all contracts necessary or incidental to the performance of its duties and in furtherance of the purposes as specified in this article in conformance with the Public Procurement Act (§ 2.2-4300 et seq.);

2. Contract with local or regional public or private entities to provide services as guardians and conservators operating as local or regional Virginia public guardian and conservator programs in those cases in which a court, pursuant to §§ 64.2-2010 and 64.2-2015, determines that a person is eligible to have a public guardian or conservator appointed;

25           3. Adopt reasonable regulations in accordance with the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et  
26 seq.) as appropriate to implement, administer, and manage the state and local or regional programs  
27 authorized by this article, including, but not limited to, the adoption of:

28           a. Minimum training and experience requirements for volunteers and professional staff of the local  
29 and regional programs;

30           b. An ideal range of staff-to-client ratios for the programs, and adoption of procedures to be  
31 followed whenever a local or regional program falls below or exceeds the ideal range of staff-to-client  
32 ratios, which shall include, but not be limited to, procedures to ensure that services shall continue to be  
33 available to those in need and that appropriate notice is given to the courts; sheriffs, where appropriate;  
34 and the Department;

35           c. Procedures governing disqualification of any program falling below or exceeding the ideal range  
36 of staff-to-client ratios, which shall include a process for evaluating any program that has exceeded the  
37 ratio to assess the effects falling below or exceeding the ideal range of ratios has, had, or is having upon  
38 the program and upon the incapacitated persons served by the program.

39           The regulations shall require that evaluations occur no less frequently than every six months and  
40 shall continue until the staff-to-client ratio returns to within the ideal range; and

41           d. Person-centered practice procedures that shall:

42           (1) Focus on the preferences and needs of the individual receiving public guardianship services;  
43 and

44           (2) Empower and support the individual receiving public guardianship services, to the extent  
45 feasible, in defining the direction for his life and promoting self-determination and community  
46 involvement.

47           4. Establish procedures and administrative guidelines to ensure the separation of local or regional  
48 Virginia public guardian and conservator programs from any other guardian or conservator program  
49 operated by the entity with whom the Department contracts, specifically addressing the need for separation  
50 in programs that may be fee-generating;

51           5. Establish recordkeeping and accounting procedures to ensure that each local or regional program  
52 (i) maintains confidential, accurate, and up-to-date records of the personal and property matters over which  
53 it has control for each incapacitated person for whom it is appointed guardian or conservator and (ii) files  
54 with the Department an account of all public and private funds received;

55           6. Establish criteria for the conduct of and filing with the Department and as otherwise required  
56 by law: values history surveys, annual decisional accounting and assessment reports, the care plan  
57 designed for the incapacitated person, and such other information as the Department may by regulation  
58 require;

59           7. Establish criteria to be used by the local and regional programs in setting priorities with regard  
60 to services to be provided;

61           8. Take such other actions as are necessary to ensure coordinated services and a reasonable review  
62 of all local and regional programs;

63           9. Maintain statistical data on the operation of the programs and report such data to the General  
64 Assembly on or before January 1 of each even-numbered year as provided in the procedures of the  
65 Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents regarding the  
66 status of the Virginia Public Guardian and Conservator Program and the identified operational needs of  
67 the program. Such report shall be posted on the Department's website. In addition, the Department shall  
68 enter into a contract with an appropriate research entity with expertise in gerontology, disabilities, and  
69 public administration to conduct an evaluation of local public guardian and conservator programs from  
70 funds specifically appropriated and allocated for this purpose, and the evaluator shall provide a report with  
71 recommendations to the Department and to the Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board  
72 established pursuant to § 51.5-149.1. Trends identified in the report, including the need for public  
73 guardians, conservators, and other types of surrogate decision-making services, shall be presented to the  
74 General Assembly. The Department shall request such a report from an appropriate research entity every  
75 four years, provided the General Assembly appropriates funds for that purpose;

76           10. Decennially review the ideal range of staff-to-client ratios for local and regional public  
77 guardian and conservator programs in the Commonwealth and make recommendations as to whether the

78 ratio should be revised to ensure that public guardians are able to meet their obligations to incapacitated  
79 persons pursuant to this article and report its findings and conclusions to the Governor and the General  
80 Assembly by December 1 of each year in which such review is performed; and

81 11. Recommend appropriate legislative or executive actions.

82 C. Nothing in this article shall prohibit the Department from contracting pursuant to subdivision  
83 B 2 with an entity that may also provide privately funded surrogate decision-making services, including  
84 guardian and conservator services funded with fees generated by the estates of incapacitated persons,  
85 provided such private programs are administered by the contracting entity entirely separately from the  
86 local or regional Virginia public guardian and conservator programs, in conformity with regulations  
87 established by the Department in that respect.

88 D. In accordance with the Public Procurement Act (§ 2.2-4300 et seq.) and recommendations of  
89 the Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board, the Department may contract with a not-for-profit  
90 private entity that does not provide services to incapacitated persons as guardian or conservator to  
91 administer the public guardian and conservator program, and, if it does, the term "Department" when used  
92 in this article shall refer to the contract administrator.

93 E. The Department shall develop and provide training for guardians pursuant to § 64.2-2019, which  
94 shall include training on the responsibilities and duties of guardians, how to complete annual guardianship  
95 reports, how to involve and encourage participation of incapacitated adults in decisions made by such  
96 guardians, medical advocacy, and decision-making on behalf of other persons.

97 **§ 64.2-2019. Duties and powers of guardian.**

98 A. A guardian stands in a fiduciary relationship to the incapacitated person for whom he was  
99 appointed guardian and may be held personally liable for a breach of any fiduciary duty to the  
100 incapacitated person. A guardian shall not be liable for the acts of the incapacitated person unless the  
101 guardian is personally negligent. A guardian shall not be required to expend personal funds on behalf of  
102 the incapacitated person.

103 B. A guardian's duties and authority shall not extend to decisions addressed in a valid advance  
104 directive or durable power of attorney previously executed by the incapacitated person. A guardian may

105 seek court authorization to revoke, suspend, or otherwise modify a durable power of attorney, as provided  
106 by the Uniform Power of Attorney Act (§ 64.2-1600 et seq.). Notwithstanding the provisions of the Health  
107 Care Decisions Act (§ 54.1-2981 et seq.) and in accordance with the procedures of § 64.2-2012, a guardian  
108 may seek court authorization to modify the designation of an agent under an advance directive, but the  
109 modification shall not in any way affect the incapacitated person's directives concerning the provision or  
110 refusal of specific medical treatments or procedures.

111 C. A guardian shall maintain sufficient contact with the incapacitated person to know of his  
112 capabilities, limitations, needs, and opportunities. The guardian shall visit the incapacitated person as often  
113 as necessary.

114 D. A guardian shall be required to seek prior court authorization to change the incapacitated  
115 person's residence to another state, to terminate or consent to a termination of the person's parental rights,  
116 or to initiate a change in the person's marital status.

117 E. A guardian shall, to the extent feasible, encourage the incapacitated person to participate in  
118 decisions, to act on his own behalf, and to develop or regain the capacity to manage personal affairs. A  
119 guardian, in making decisions, shall consider the expressed desires and personal values of the  
120 incapacitated person to the extent known and shall otherwise act in the incapacitated person's best interest  
121 and exercise reasonable care, diligence, and prudence. A guardian shall not unreasonably restrict an  
122 incapacitated person's ability to communicate with, visit, or interact with other persons with whom the  
123 incapacitated person has an established relationship.

124 E1. A guardian and any staff employed or contracted by such guardian to perform guardianship  
125 duties on behalf of the guardian shall complete the training developed by the Department for Aging and  
126 Rehabilitative Services pursuant to subsection E of § 51.5-150 within four months of the date of entry of  
127 the initial order of appointment pursuant to § 64.2-2009, unless such training was completed within the  
128 past 36 months in conjunction with another guardianship appointment made pursuant to § 64.2-2009. No  
129 guardian shall be required to complete such training more frequently than once every 36 months.

130 F. A guardian shall have authority to make arrangements for the funeral and disposition of remains,  
131 including cremation, interment, entombment, memorialization, inurnment, or scattering of the cremains,

132 or some combination thereof, if the guardian is not aware of any person that has been otherwise designated  
133 to make such arrangements as set forth in § 54.1-2825. A guardian shall have authority to make  
134 arrangements for the funeral and disposition of remains after the death of an incapacitated person if, after  
135 the guardian has made a good faith effort to locate the next of kin of the incapacitated person to determine  
136 if the next of kin wishes to make such arrangements, the next of kin does not wish to make the  
137 arrangements or the next of kin cannot be located. Good faith effort shall include contacting the next of  
138 kin identified in the petition for appointment of a guardian. The funeral service licensee, funeral service  
139 establishment, registered crematory, cemetery, cemetery operator, or guardian shall be immune from civil  
140 liability for any act, decision, or omission resulting from acceptance of any dead body for burial,  
141 cremation, or other disposition when the provisions of this section are met, unless such acts, decisions, or  
142 omissions resulted from bad faith or malicious intent.

143 **§ 64.2-2020. Annual reports by guardians.**

144 A. A guardian shall file an annual report in compliance with the filing deadlines in § 64.2-1305  
145 with the local department of social services for the jurisdiction where the incapacitated person then resides.  
146 The annual report shall be on a form prepared by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme  
147 Court and shall be accompanied by a filing fee of \$5. To the extent practicable, the annual report shall be  
148 formatted in a manner to encourage standardized and detailed responses from guardians. The local  
149 department shall retain the fee in the jurisdiction where the fee is collected for use in the provision of  
150 services to adults in need of protection. Within 60 days of receipt of the annual report, the local department  
151 shall file a copy of the annual report with the clerk of the circuit court that appointed the guardian, to be  
152 placed with the court papers pertaining to the guardianship case. Twice each year the local department  
153 shall file with the clerk of the circuit court a list of all guardians who are more than 90 days delinquent in  
154 filing an annual report as required by this section. If the guardian is also a conservator, a settlement of  
155 accounts shall also be filed with the commissioner of accounts as provided in § 64.2-1305.

156 B. The annual report to the local department of social services shall include:

157 1. A description of the current mental, physical, and social condition of the incapacitated person,  
158 including any change in diagnosis or assessment of any such condition of such incapacitated person by  
159 any medical provider since the last report;

160 2. A description of the incapacitated person's living arrangements during the reported period,  
161 including a specific assessment of the adequacy of such living arrangement;

162 3. The medical, educational, vocational, social, recreational, and any other professional services  
163 and activities provided to the incapacitated person and the guardian's opinion as to the adequacy of the  
164 incapacitated person's care. The information required by this subdivision shall include (i) the specific  
165 names of the medical providers that have treated the incapacitated person and a description of the  
166 frequency or number of times the incapacitated person was seen by such providers; (ii) the date and  
167 location of and reason for any hospitalization of such incapacitated person; and (iii) a description of the  
168 educational, vocational, social, and recreational activities in which such incapacitated person participated;

169 4. A statement of whether the guardian agrees with the current treatment or habilitation plan;

170 5. A statement of whether the incapacitated person has been an alleged victim in a report of abuse,  
171 neglect, or exploitation made pursuant to Article 2 (§ 63.2-1603 et seq.) of Chapter 16 of Title 63.2, to the  
172 extent known, and whether there are any other indications of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of such  
173 incapacitated person;

174 6. A recommendation as to the need for continued guardianship and any recommended changes in  
175 the scope of the guardianship;

176 7. The name of any persons whose access to communicate, visit, or interact with the incapacitated  
177 person has been restricted and the reasons for such restriction;

178 8. A self-assessment by the guardian as to whether he feels he is able to continue to carry out the  
179 powers and duties imposed upon him by § 64.2-2019 and as specified in the court's order of appointment  
180 pursuant to § 64.2-2009;

181 9. A statement as to whether the guardian and any staff employed or contracted by such guardian  
182 to perform guardianship duties on behalf of the guardian have completed the training required by  
183 subsection E1 of § 64.2-2019;

184 10. Unless the incapacitated person resides with the guardian, a statement of the frequency and  
185 nature of any (i) in-person visits from the guardian with the incapacitated person over the course of the  
186 previous year and (ii) visits over the course of the previous year from a designee who is directly supervised  
187 or contracted by the guardian, including the name of the designee performing such visit. If any visit  
188 described in this section is made virtually, the guardian shall include such information in the annual report;

189 ~~10-11.~~ If no visit is made within a six-month period, the guardian shall describe any challenges or  
190 limitations in completing such visit;

191 ~~11-12.~~ A general description of the activities taken on by the guardian for the benefit of the  
192 incapacitated person during the past year;

193 ~~12-13.~~ Any other information deemed necessary by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the  
194 Supreme Court of Virginia or the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services to understand the  
195 condition, treatment, and well-being of the incapacitated person;

196 ~~13-14.~~ Any other information useful in the opinion of the guardian; and

197 ~~14-15.~~ The compensation requested and the reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by the  
198 guardian.

199 The guardian shall certify by signing under oath that the information contained in the annual report  
200 is true and correct to the best of his knowledge. If a guardian makes a false entry or statement in the annual  
201 report, he shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$500. Such penalty shall be collected by the  
202 attorney for the Commonwealth or the county or city attorney, and the proceeds shall be deposited into  
203 the general fund.

204 C. If the local department of social services files notice that the annual report has not been timely  
205 filed in accordance with subsection A with the clerk of the circuit court, the court may issue a summons  
206 or rule to show cause why the guardian has failed to file such annual report.

207 **2. That the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services shall develop and implement the**  
208 **training specified by § 51.5-150 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, by July 1, 2024.**



209 3. That guardians appointed pursuant to § 64.2-2009 of the Code of Virginia prior to July 1, 2024,  
210 shall complete the training required by § 64.2-2019 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act,  
211 by January 1, 2026.

212 4. That the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia shall prepare the  
213 annual report form specified by § 64.2-2020 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, by July  
214 1, 2024.

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