

No. 55. An act relating to recovery of profits from crime, the disposition of property upon death, transfer of interest in vehicle upon death, homestead exemption, unclaimed property, credit card fee disputes, and patient's privilege.

(S.26)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 5351(8) is added to read:

(8) "Profits from crimes" means:

(A) any property obtained through or income generated from the commission of a crime in which the defendant was convicted;

(B) any property obtained by or income generated from the sale, conversion, or exchange of proceeds of a crime, including any gain realized by such sale, conversion, or exchange;

(C) any property that the defendant obtained or any income generated as a result of having committed the crime, including any assets obtained through the use of unique knowledge acquired during the commission of or in preparation for the commission of the crime, as well as any property obtained or income generated from the sale, conversion, or exchange of such property and any gain realized by such sale, conversion, or exchange; and

(D) any property defendant obtained or any income generated from the sale of tangible property the value of which is increased by the notoriety gained from the conviction of an offense by the person accused or convicted of the crime.

Sec. 2. 13 V.S.A. chapter 167, subchapter 4 is added to read:

Subchapter 4. Profits from Crime

§ 5421. NOTICE OF PROFITS FROM A CRIME

(a) Every person, firm, corporation, partnership, association, or other legal entity which knowingly contracts for, pays, or agrees to pay any profits from a crime, as defined in subdivision 5351(8) of this title, to a person charged with or convicted of that crime shall give written notice to the attorney general of the payment or obligation to pay as soon as is practicable after discovering that the payment is or will be a profit from a crime.

(b) The attorney general, upon receipt of notice of a contract, agreement to pay, or payment of profits of the crime shall send written notice of the existence of such profits to all known victims of the crime at their last known addresses.

§ 5422. ACTIONS TO RECOVER PROFITS FROM A CRIME

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including any statute of limitations, any crime victim shall have the right to bring a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction to recover money damages from a person convicted of that crime, or the legal representative of that convicted person, within three years of the discovery of any profits from the crime. Any damages awarded in such action shall be recoverable only up to the value of the profits of the crime. This section shall not limit the right of a victim to proceed or recover under another cause of action.

(b) The attorney general may, within three years of the discovery of any profits from the crime, bring a civil action on behalf of the state to enforce the subrogation rights described in section 5357 of this title.

(c) If the full value of any profits from the crime has not yet been claimed by either the victim of the crime or the victim's representative, the attorney general, or both, within three years of the discovery of such profits, then the state may bring a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction to recover the costs incurred by providing the defendant with counsel, if any, and other costs reasonably incurred or to be incurred in the incarceration of the defendant.

(d) Upon the filing of an action pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the victim shall deliver a copy of the summons and complaint to the attorney general. Upon receipt of a copy of the summons and complaint, the attorney general shall send written notice of the alleged existence of profits from the crime to all other known victims at their last known addresses.

(e) To avoid the wasting of assets identified in the complaint as newly discovered profits of the crime, the attorney general, acting on behalf of the plaintiff and all other victims, shall have the right to apply for all remedies that are also otherwise available to the victim.

Sec. 3. 14 V.S.A. chapter 85 is added to Part 3 to read:

CHAPTER 85. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

§ 1971. INTENTIONAL KILLING; OFFENDER NOT TO BENEFIT

(a) The acquisition of any property, interest, power, or benefit by a person as the result of the person's commission of an intentional and unlawful killing shall be treated in accordance with the principle that a killer cannot profit from his or her wrong, and a court shall have the power to distribute, reform, revoke, or otherwise dispose of such property, interest, power, or benefit in accord with the principles of this section.

(b) The distribution, reformation, revocation, or disposition of any property, interest, power, or benefit subject to subsection (a) of this section shall not affect any valid liens or mortgages on such property, interest, power, or benefit.

Sec. 4. REPEAL

Chapters 41, 43, and 45 of Title 14 are repealed.

Sec. 5. 14 V.S.A. chapter 42 is added to Part 2 to read:

CHAPTER 42. DESCENT AND SURVIVORS' RIGHTS

Subchapter 1. General Provisions

§ 301. INTESTATE ESTATE

(a) Any part of a decedent's estate not effectively disposed of by will passes by intestate succession to the decedent's heirs, except as modified by the decedent's will.

(b) A decedent's will may expressly exclude or limit the right of an individual or a class to inherit property. If such an individual or member of such a class survives the decedent, the share of the decedent's intestate estate

which would have passed to that individual or member of such a class passes subject to any such limitation or exclusion set forth in the will.

(c) Nothing in this section shall preclude the surviving spouse of the decedent from making the election and receiving the benefits provided by section 319 of this title.

§ 302. DOWER AND CURTESY ABOLISHED

The estates of dower and curtesy are abolished.

§ 303. AFTERBORN HEIRS

For purposes of this chapter and chapter 1 of this title relating to wills, an individual in gestation at a particular time is treated as living at that time if the individual lives 120 hours or more after birth.

Subchapter 2. Survivors' Rights and Allowances

§ 311. SHARE OF SURVIVING SPOUSE

After payment of the debts, funeral charges, and expenses of administration, the intestate share of the decedent's surviving spouse is as follows:

(1) The surviving spouse shall receive the entire intestate estate if no descendant of the decedent survives the decedent or if all of the decedent's surviving descendants are also descendants of the surviving spouse.

(2) In the event there shall survive the decedent one or more descendants of the decedent who are not descendants of the surviving spouse and are not excluded by the decedent's will from inheriting from the decedent, the surviving spouse shall receive one-half of the intestate estate.

§ 312. SURVIVING SPOUSE TO RECEIVE HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Upon motion, the surviving spouse of a decedent may receive out of the decedent's estate all furnishings and furniture in the decedent's household when the decedent leaves no descendants who object. If any objection is made by any of the descendants, the court shall decide what, if any, of such personalty shall pass under this section. Goods and effects so assigned shall be in addition to the distributive share of the estate to which the surviving spouse is entitled under other provisions of law. In making a determination pursuant to this section, the court may consider the length of the decedent's marriage, or civil union, the sentimental and monetary value of the property, and the source of the decedent's interest in the property.

§ 313. SURVIVING SPOUSE; VESSEL, SNOWMOBILE, ORALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE

Whenever the estate of a decedent who dies intestate consists principally of a vessel, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle, the surviving spouse shall be deemed to be the owner of the vessel, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle, and title to the vessel, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle shall automatically pass to the surviving spouse. The surviving spouse may register the vessel, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle pursuant to section 3816 of Title 23.

§ 314. SHARE OF HEIRS OTHER THAN SURVIVING SPOUSE

(a) The balance of the intestate estate not passing to the decedent's surviving spouse under section 311 of this title passes to the decedent's descendants by right of representation.

(b) If there is no taker under subsection (a) of this section, the intestate estate passes in the following order:

(1) to the decedent's parents equally if both survive or to the surviving parent;

(2) to the decedent's siblings and the descendants of any deceased siblings by right of representation;

(3) one-half of the intestate estate to the decedent's paternal grandparents equally if they both survive or to the surviving paternal grandparent and one-half of the intestate estate to the decedent's maternal grandparents equally if they both survive or to the surviving maternal grandparent and if decedent is survived by a grandparent, or grandparents on only one side, to that grandparent or those grandparents;

(4) in equal shares to the next of kin in equal degree.

(c) If property passes under this section by right of representation, the property shall be divided into as many equal shares as there are children or siblings of the decedent, as the case may be, who either survive the decedent or who predecease the decedent leaving surviving descendants.

§ 315. PARENT AND CHILD RELATIONSHIP

For the purpose of intestate succession, an individual is the child of his or her parents, regardless of their marital status, but a parent shall not inherit from a child unless the parent has openly acknowledged the child and not refused to support the child. The parent and child relationship may be established in parentage proceedings under subchapter 3A of chapter 5 of Title 15.

§ 316. SUPPORT OF SURVIVING SPOUSE AND FAMILY DURING SETTLEMENT

The probate court may make reasonable allowance for the expenses of maintenance of the surviving spouse and minor children or either, constituting the family of a decedent, out of the personal estate or the income of real or personal estate from date of death until settlement of the estate, but for no longer a period than until their shares in the estate are assigned to them or, in case of an insolvent estate, for not more than eight months after administration is granted. This allowance may take priority, in the discretion of the court, over debts of the estate.

§ 317. ALLOWANCE TO CHILDREN BEFORE PAYMENT OF DEBTS

When a person dies leaving children under 18 years of age, an allowance may be made for the necessary maintenance of such children until they become 18 years of age. Such allowance shall be made before any distribution of the estate among creditors, heirs, or beneficiaries by will.

§ 318. ALLOWANCE TO CHILDREN AFTER PAYMENT OF DEBTS

Before any partition or division of an estate among the heirs or beneficiaries

by will, an allowance may be made for the necessary expenses of the support of the children of the decedent under 18 years of age until they arrive at that age. The probate court may order the executor or administrator to retain sufficient estate assets for that purpose, except where some provision is made by will for their support.

§ 319. WAIVER OF WILL BY SURVIVING SPOUSE

(a) A surviving spouse may waive the provisions of the decedent's will and in lieu thereof elect to take one-half of the balance of the estate, after the payment of claims and expenses.

(b) The surviving spouse must be living at the time this election is made. If the surviving spouse is mentally disabled and cannot make the election personally, a guardian or attorney in fact under a valid durable power of attorney may do so.

§ 320. EFFECT OF DIVORCE ORDER

A final divorce order from any state shall have the effect of nullifying a gift by will or inheritance by operation of law to an individual who was the decedent's spouse at the time the will was executed if the decedent was no longer married to or in a civil union with that individual at the time of death, unless his or her will specifically states to the contrary.

§ 321. CONVEYANCES TO DEFEAT SPOUSE'S INTEREST

A voluntary transfer of any property by an individual during a marriage or civil union and not to take effect until after the individual's death, made

without adequate consideration and for the primary purpose of defeating a surviving spouse in a claim to a share of the decedent's property so transferred, shall be void and inoperative to bar the claim. The decedent shall be deemed at the time of his or her death to be the owner and seised of an interest in such property sufficient for the purpose of assigning and setting out the surviving spouse's share.

§ 322. UNLAWFUL KILLING AFFECTING INHERITANCE

Notwithstanding sections 311 through 314 of this title or provisions otherwise made, in any case in which an individual is entitled to inherit or receive property under the last will of a decedent, or otherwise, such individual's share in the decedent's estate shall be forfeited and shall pass to the remaining heirs or beneficiaries of the decedent if the individual intentionally and unlawfully kills the decedent. In any proceedings to contest the right of an individual to inherit or receive property under a will or otherwise, the record of that individual's conviction of intentionally and unlawfully killing the decedent shall be admissible in evidence and shall conclusively establish that such individual did intentionally and unlawfully kill the decedent.

Subchapter 3. Descent, Omitted Issue, and Lapsed Legacies

§ 331. DEGREES; HOW COMPUTED: KINDRED OF HALF-BLOOD

Kindred of the half-blood shall inherit the same share they would inherit if they were of the whole blood.

§ 332. SHARE OF AFTERBORN CHILD

When a child of a testator is born after the making of a will and provision is not therein made for that child, he or she shall have the same share in the estate of the testator as if the testator had died intestate unless it is apparent from the will that it was the intention of the testator that provision should not be made for the child.

§ 333. SHARE OF CHILD OR DESCENDANT OF CHILD OMITTEDFROM WILL

When a testator omits to provide in his or her will for any of his or her children, or for the descendants of a deceased child, and it appears that the omission was made by mistake or accident, the child or descendants, as the case may be, shall have and be assigned the same share of the estate of the testator as if the testator had died intestate.

§ 334. AFTERBORN AND OMITTED CHILD; FROM WHAT PART OFESTATE SHARE TAKEN

When a share of a testator's estate is assigned to a child born after the making of a will, or to a child or the descendant of a child omitted in the will, the share shall be taken first from the estate not disposed of by the will, if there is any. If that is not sufficient, so much as is necessary shall be taken from the devisees or legatees in proportion to the value of the estate they respectively receive under the will. If the obvious intention of the testator, as to some specific devise, legacy, or other provision in the will, would thereby be

defeated, the specific devise, legacy, or provision may be exempted from such apportionment and a different apportionment adopted in the discretion of the court.

§ 335. BENEFICIARY DYING BEFORE TESTATOR: DESCENDANTS

TO TAKE

When a testamentary gift is made to a child or other kindred of the testator, and the designated beneficiary dies before the testator, leaving one or more descendants who survive the testator, such descendants shall take the gift that the designated beneficiary would have taken if he or she had survived the testator, unless a different disposition is required by the will.

§ 336. INDIVIDUAL ABSENT AND UNHEARD OF; SHARE OF ESTATE

If an individual entitled to a distributive share of the estate of a decedent is absent and unheard of for six years, two of which are after the death of the decedent, the probate court in which the decedent's estate is pending may order the share of the absent individual distributed in accordance with the terms of the decedent's will or the laws of intestacy as if such absent individual had not survived the decedent. If the absent individual proves to be alive, he or she shall be entitled to the share of the estate notwithstanding prior distribution, and may recover in an action on this statute any portion thereof which any other individual received under order. Before an order is made for the payment or distribution of any money or estate as authorized in this section, notice shall be given as provided by the Vermont Rules of Probate Procedure.

§ 337. REQUIREMENT THAT INDIVIDUAL SURVIVE DECEDENT FOR
120 HOURS

Except as provided in the decedent's will, an individual who fails to survive the decedent by 120 hours is deemed to have predeceased the decedent for purposes of homestead allowance, exempt property, intestate succession, and taking under decedent's will, and the decedent's heirs and beneficiaries shall be determined accordingly. If it is not established by clear and convincing evidence that an individual who would otherwise be an heir or beneficiary survived the decedent by 120 hours, it is deemed that the individual failed to survive for the required period. This section is not to be applied if its application would result in escheat.

§ 338. DISTRIBUTION; ORDER IN WHICH ASSETS APPROPRIATED;
ABATEMENT

(a)(1) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, shares of distributees given under a will abate, without any preference or priority as between real and personal property, in the following order:

- (A) property not disposed of by the will;
- (B) residuary devises and bequests;
- (C) general devises and bequests;
- (D) specific devises and bequests.

(2) For purpose of abatement, a general devise or bequest charged on any specific property or fund is a specific devise or bequest to the extent of the

value of the property on which it is charged, and upon the failure or insufficiency of the property on which it is charged, a general devise or bequest to the extent of the failure or insufficiency. Abatement within each classification is in proportion to the amounts of property each of the beneficiaries would have received if full distribution of the property had been made in accordance with the terms of the will.

(b) If the will expresses an order of abatement or if the testamentary plan or the express or implied purpose of a devise or bequest would be defeated by the order of abatement listed in subsection (a) of this section, the shares of the distributees shall abate as may be necessary to give effect to the intention of the testator.

(c) If the subject of a preferred devise or bequest is sold or used incident to administration, abatement shall be achieved by appropriate adjustments in, or contribution from, other interests in the remaining assets.

Sec. 6. 23 V.S.A. § 2023 is amended to read:

§ 2023. TRANSFER OF INTEREST IN VEHICLE

(a) If an owner transfers his or her interest in a vehicle, other than by the creation of a security interest, he or she shall, at the time of delivery of the vehicle, execute an assignment and warranty of title to the transferee in the space provided therefor on the certificate or as the commissioner prescribes, and of the odometer reading or hubometer reading or clock meter reading of the vehicle at the time of delivery in the space provided therefor on the

certificate, and cause the certificate and assignment to be mailed or delivered to the transferee or to the commissioner. Where title to a vehicle is in the name of more than one person, the nature of the ownership must be indicated by one of the following on the certificate of title:

- (1) TEN ENT (tenants by the entirety);
- (2) JTEN (joint tenants);
- (3) TEN COM (tenants in common); ~~or~~
- (4) PTNRS (partners); or
- (5) TOD (transfer on death).

(b) Upon request of the owner or transferee, a lienholder in possession of the certificate of title shall, unless the transfer was a breach of his or her security agreement, either deliver the certificate to the transferee for delivery to the commissioner or, upon receipt from the transferee of the owner's assignment, the transferee's application for a new certificate and the required fee, mail or deliver them to the commissioner. The delivery of the certificate does not affect the rights of the lienholder under his security agreement.

(c) If a security interest is reserved or created at the time of the transfer, the certificate of title shall be retained by or delivered to the person who becomes the lienholder, and the parties shall comply with the provisions of section 2043 of this title.

(d) Except as provided in section 2024 of this title and as between the parties, a transfer by an owner is not effective until the provisions of this

section and section 2026 of this title have been complied with; however, an owner who has delivered possession of the vehicle to the transferee and has complied with the provisions of this section and section 2026 of this title requiring action by him or her is not liable as owner for any damages thereafter resulting from operation of the vehicle.

(e) Notwithstanding other provisions of the law, whenever the estate of an individual who dies intestate consists principally of an automobile, the surviving spouse shall be deemed to be the owner of the motor vehicle and title to the same shall automatically and by virtue hereof pass to said surviving spouse. Registration of the vehicle in the name of the surviving spouse shall be effected by payment of a transfer fee of \$7.00. This transaction is exempt from the provisions of the purchase and use tax on motor vehicles.

(1) Notwithstanding other provisions of the law, and except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, whenever the estate of an individual consists in whole or in part of a motor vehicle, and the person's will or other testamentary document does not specifically address disposition of motor vehicles, the surviving spouse shall be deemed to be the owner of the motor vehicle and title to the motor vehicle shall automatically pass to the surviving spouse. Registration and title of the motor vehicle in the name of the surviving spouse shall be effected by payment of a transfer fee of \$7.00. This transaction is exempt from the provisions of the purchase and use tax on motor vehicles.

(2) This subsection shall apply to no more than two motor vehicles, and shall not apply if the motor vehicle is titled in the name of one or more persons other than the decedent and the surviving spouse.

(f) Where the title identifies a person who will become the owner upon the death of the principal owner (transfer on death), the principal owner shall have all rights of ownership and rights of transfer until his or her death. The designated transferee shall have no rights of ownership until such time as the principal owner has died as established by a valid death certificate. At that time, the transferee shall become the owner of the vehicle subject to any existing security interests.

Sec. 7. 23 V.S.A. § 3816 is amended to read:

§ 3816. TRANSFER OF INTEREST IN VESSEL

* * *

(e) Pursuant to the provisions of 14 V.S.A. § ~~403a~~ 313, whenever the estate of an individual who dies intestate consists principally of a vessel, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle, the surviving spouse shall be deemed to be the owner of the vessel, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle and title to the vessel, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle shall automatically pass to the surviving spouse. The surviving spouse may register the vessel, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle by paying a transfer fee not to exceed \$2.00.

Sec. 8. 27 V.S.A. §§ 101 and 102 are amended to read:

§ 101. DEFINITION; EXEMPTION FROM ATTACHMENT AND
EXECUTION

The homestead of a natural person consisting of a dwelling house, outbuildings and the land used in connection therewith, not exceeding ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$125,000.00 in value, and owned and used or kept by such person as a homestead together with the rents, issues, profits, and products thereof, shall be exempt from attachment and execution except as hereinafter provided.

§ 102. DESIGNATING HOMESTEAD IN CASE OF LEVY

When an execution is levied upon real estate of the person of which a homestead is a part or upon that part of a homestead in excess of the limitation of ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$125,000.00 in value, that person may designate and choose the part thereof, not exceeding the limited value, to which the exemption created in section 101 of this title shall apply. Upon designation and choice or refusal to designate or choose, the officer levying the execution, if the parties fail to agree upon appraisers, shall appoint three disinterested freeholders of the vicinity who shall be sworn by him or her and who shall fix the location and boundaries of the homestead to the amount of ~~\$75,000.00~~ \$125,000.00 in value. The officer shall then proceed with the sale of the residue of the real estate on the execution as in other cases, and the doings in respect to the homestead shall be stated in the return upon the execution.

Sec. 9. 14A V.S.A. § 418 is added to read:

§ 418. INTENTIONAL AND UNLAWFUL KILLING; TERMINATION OF INTEREST IN TRUST

(a) A person who commits an intentional and unlawful killing shall forfeit an interest in a trust:

(1) to the extent the trust was funded by the victim of the intentional and unlawful killing or would be funded by the victim's estate;

(2) to the extent the person's interest in the trust is augmented or advanced by the termination of the victim's interest in the trust as the result of the person's intentional and unlawful killing of the victim, and the interest is attributable to funding by someone other than the person or the victim of the intentional and unlawful killing;

(3) if the interest was created as the result of an exercise of a power of appointment held by the victim.

(b) An interest in a trust that is forfeited under subsection (a) of this section shall be administered and distributed in accordance with the terms of the trust as if the person whose interest is forfeited died on the date of the intentional and unlawful killing.

(c) A person who commits an intentional and unlawful killing shall be removed as trustee of a trust:

(1) that was funded by the victim of the intentional and unlawful killing or would be funded by the victim's estate;

(2) in which the person's interest in the trust is augmented or advanced by the termination of the victim's interest in the trust as the result of the person's intentional and unlawful killing of the victim, and the interest is attributable to funding by someone other than the person or the victim of the intentional and unlawful killing;

(d) For purposes of this section, the record of a conviction of a person for an intentional and unlawful killing of another shall be conclusive evidence that the person committed an intentional and unlawful killing of the other person.

(e) In the absence of a final judgment of conviction, a beneficiary or trustee of a trust may petition the probate court for a determination, or the court may on its own initiative determine, that the interest of a person who commits an intentional and unlawful killing has been forfeited under subsection (a) of this section, or that a person should be removed as trustee under subsection (c) of this section.

(f) This section shall apply to any interest in a trust that is or will be distributed on or after January 1, 2009.

Sec. 10. 27 V.S.A. § 1270 is amended to read:

§ 1270. DECEASED OWNERS; MULTIPLE CLAIMANTS

(a) If the treasurer holds unclaimed property in the name of a deceased owner, the treasurer may deliver the property as follows:

(1) In the case of an open estate, to the administrator or executor.

(2) In the case of a closed estate and the unclaimed property is valued at less than ~~\$2,500.00~~ \$5,000.00, in accordance with the probate court decree of distribution.

(3) In the absence of an open estate or probate court decree of distribution, and the unclaimed property is valued at less than ~~\$2,500.00~~ \$5,000.00 to the surviving spouse of the deceased owner, or, if there is no surviving spouse, then to the next of kin according to section 551 of Title 14.

(4) In all other cases where the treasurer holds property in the name of a deceased owner, a probate estate shall be opened by the claimant, or other interested party, in order to determine the appropriate distribution of the unclaimed property. Where an estate is opened solely to distribute unclaimed property under this section, the probate court may waive any filing fees.

(b) If the treasurer holds unclaimed property valued at \$100.00 \$250.00 or less which more than one person owns, the treasurer may deliver the property as follows:

(1) If the property has been listed on the treasurer's website for less than one year, a proportionate share to each of the persons who owns the property and who files a claim.

(2) If the property has been listed on the treasurer's website for a year or more, to the first person who files a claim and who owns at least a share of the property.

Sec. 11. 8 V.S.A. § 14304 is added to read:

§ 14304. CARD HOLDER REPRESENTED BY LEGAL COUNSEL

(a) A credit card company or its creditor or collection agency shall not contact a card holder regarding a debt, late fee, or other charge once informed that the card holder is disputing the debt, late fee, or other charge; is represented by legal counsel in the dispute; and the card holder has provided the credit card company or its creditor or collection agency with the name, address, and telephone number of the legal counsel.

(b) A credit card company or its creditor or collection agency that violates subsection (a) of this section shall be fined not more than \$10,000.00.

(c) Each violation of subsection (a) of this section shall be considered a separate offense.

Sec. 12. 12 V.S.A. § 1612 is amended to read:

§ 1612. ~~PATIENTS'~~ PATIENT'S PRIVILEGE

(a) Confidential information privileged. Unless the patient waives the privilege or unless the privilege is waived by an express provision of law, a person authorized to practice medicine, chiropractic, or dentistry, a registered professional or licensed practical nurse, or a mental health professional as defined in 18 V.S.A. § 7101(13) shall not be allowed to disclose any information acquired in attending a patient in a professional capacity, including joint or group counseling sessions, and which was necessary to enable the provider to act in that capacity.

(b) Identification by dentist; crime committed against patient under ~~sixteen~~ 16. A dentist shall be required to disclose information necessary for identification of a patient. A physician, dentist, chiropractor, or nurse shall be required to disclose information indicating that a patient who is under the age of ~~sixteen~~ 16 years has been the victim of a crime.

(c) Mental or physical condition of deceased patient.

(1) A physician, chiropractor, or nurse shall be required to disclose any information as to the mental or physical condition of a deceased patient privileged under subsection (a) of this section, except information which would tend to disgrace the memory of the decedent, either in the absence of an objection by a party to the litigation or when the privilege has been waived:

~~(1)(A)~~ by the personal representative, or the surviving spouse, or the next of kin of the decedent; or

~~(2)(B)~~ in any litigation where the interests of the personal representative are deemed by the trial judge to be adverse to those of the estate of the decedent, by any party in interest; or

~~(3)(C)~~ if the validity of the will of the decedent is in question, by the executor named in the will, or the surviving spouse or any heir-at-law or any of the next of kin or any other party in interest.

(2) A physician, dentist, chiropractor, mental health professional, or nurse shall be required to disclose any information as to the mental or physical

condition of a deceased patient privileged under subsection (a) of this section upon request to the chief medical examiner.

Sec. 13. STUDY

The committee on judicial operation created by Sec. 5.101.1 of No. 192 of the Acts of the 2007 Adj. Sess. (2008) shall, in addition to its other duties, study the issue of allowing a single person to simultaneously hold the offices of assistant judge and probate judge. The study shall include an analysis of whether simultaneously holding both offices by a single person is constitutional as well as an analysis of its impact on the administration of justice.

Sec. 14. EFFECTIVE DATE

(a) Secs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 14, and 15 of this act shall take effect on passage. Sec. 5 of this act shall apply only to the estates of persons dying on or after the effective date of Sec. 5 of this act.

(b) Secs. 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13 of this act shall take effect July 1, 2009.

Sec. 15. REPEAL

Sec. 2a of No. 161 of the Acts of the 2005 legislative session (sunset of subsection regarding multiple claimants of unclaimed property valued at \$100.00 or less) is repealed so that 27 V.S.A. § 1270(b) shall not be repealed on July 1, 2009.

Approved: June 1, 2009