

State of Arkansas  
93rd General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2021

As Engrossed: H3/29/21

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1689

By: Representatives Vaught, Gazaway, M. Gray

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE STUDY ON  
MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

### Subtitle

TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE STUDY  
ON MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. Arkansas Legislative Study on Mental and Behavioral Health – Creation – Duties.

(a)(1) The Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor shall meet to conduct the Arkansas Legislative Study on Mental Health.

(b)(1) The Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Chair of the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor shall call the first meeting for the purpose of beginning the study within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this act.

(2) The Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor shall meet at least one (1) time every two (2) months in order to conduct the study but may meet more often at the call of the Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Chair of the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor.

(c) The purpose of the study is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the mental and behavioral health resources and care currently available in the State of Arkansas and to recommend legislation to the General Assembly



regarding best practices and improvements within the area of mental and behavioral health care for consideration during the 2023 Regular Session.

(d) In order to achieve the purpose of this section, the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor shall study the following:

(1) Access to and availability of mental and behavioral health care within this state;

(2) Existing mental and behavioral healthcare facilities in this state;

(3) Medicaid programs regarding mental and behavioral health and other public and private medical reimbursements for mental and behavioral healthcare providers and facilities within and without this state;

(4) Best practices for provision of mental ad behavioral health services;

(5) Mental and behavioral health programs in other states;

(6) The utilization and financial condition of the crisis stabilization units and the Arkansas State Hospital;

(7) Transportation of mental and behavioral health patients in Arkansas;

(8) The rate of deaths by suicide of school-aged children in this state;

(9) Mental health screenings and suicide prevention measures for children in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12); and

(10) Other matters related to mental and behavioral health services.

(e)(1) On or before December 1, 2022, the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor shall file with the Legislative Council a final written report of their activities, findings, and recommendations.

(2) Upon filing, the Arkansas Legislative Study on Mental and Behavioral Health shall be complete.

/s/Vaught

APPROVED: 4/20/21