

State of Arkansas  
94th General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2023

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1565

By: Representatives Vaught, Evans, Cavanaugh, McCullough, Gazaway, L. Johnson, D. Garner, Hudson, Pilkington

By: Senators C. Tucker, G. Leding, K. Hammer

## 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) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Act 802 of 2021 created the Arkansas Legislative Study on Mental and Behavioral Health;

(2) The House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor met throughout the previous biennium to conduct the study and submitted their final report, as required by Act 802 to the Legislative Council prior to the deadline of December 1, 2022;

(3) The final written report of the activities, findings, and recommendations under the study was an agenda item for the Legislative Council at its meeting on December 16, 2022; and

(4) The work of the committees with regard to the subject matter of the study is not complete and should be continued by the Ninety-Fourth



General Assembly pursuant to the requirements of subsections (b) through (f) of this section.

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

(c)(1) The Chair of the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Chair of the Senate 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 House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Senate 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 House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor.

(d) 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 2025 Regular Session.

(e) In order to achieve the purposes of this section, the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Senate 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 and 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.

(f)(1) On or before October 31, 2024, the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Senate 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.

**APPROVED: 4/10/23**