
Children, Youth & Families Committee

HB 1800

Brief Description: Increasing access to behavioral health services for minors.

Sponsors: Representatives Eslick, Callan, Leavitt, Davis, Dent, Goodman, Ramos, Rule, Santos, Senn, Wylie, Tharinger, Stonier and Frame.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Health Care Authority (HCA) to dedicate at least one full-time employee focused on connecting families, behavioral health providers, educators, and other stakeholders with current information about law and policy related to behavioral health services for minors.
- Requires the HCA to convene stakeholders to design, further define, and implement a parent portal.
- Requires the HCA to conduct stakeholder engagement efforts instead of an annual survey in measuring the impacts of previous legislation related to minor behavioral health and delays some of the reporting requirements associated with that effort.

Hearing Date: 1/17/22

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group.

The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group (work group) was established to identify barriers to and opportunities for accessing behavioral health services for children and their families and advise the Legislature on statewide behavioral health services for those children and families. There are 38 members of this work group, including legislators,

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representatives from state agencies, providers, parent and child representatives, and advocates.

At the direction of the co-chairs of the work group, the work group may convene advisory groups to evaluate specific issues and report related findings and recommendations to the full work group. The work group is required to convene an advisory group focused on school-based behavioral health and suicide prevention.

The work group must submit annual recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature.

Health Care Authority Annual Survey.

The Health Care Authority (HCA) is required to conduct an annual survey of a sample group of parents, youth, and behavioral health providers to measure the impacts of implementing minor behavioral health policies that were established in law in 2019. These annual surveys must be completed for three years ending on July 1, 2022. The HCA must submit a report on the results of the surveys to the Governor and the Legislature, with a final report due November 1, 2022.

State Office of Behavioral Health Consumer Advocacy.

In 2021 the State Office of Behavioral Health Consumer Advocacy (SOBHCA) was created to establish rules, standards, and procedures for behavioral health consumer advocacy services across the state. The SOBHCA must contract with a private nonprofit organization to provide behavioral health consumer advocacy services including certifying and coordinating the activities of behavioral health advocates across the state.

Summary of Bill:

The Health Care Authority (HCA) must dedicate at least one full-time employee to:

- connecting families, behavioral health providers, educators, and other stakeholders with current information about law and policy related to behavioral health services for minors;
- creating shareable content appropriate for communicating policy and resources related to behavioral health services for minors; and
- designing and maintaining a communications plan related to behavioral health services for minors involving social media and other forms of direct outreach to providers, families, and youth.

The HCA must convene stakeholders to design, further define, and implement a parent portal, which is a method for connecting families to their community's service and education infrastructure related to behavioral health services for minors. By November 1, 2022, the HCA must provide a report to the Legislature and the Governor that describes:

- the stakeholder process used to design the parent portal;
- the design of the parent portal; and
- other relevant information about successfully implementing the parent portal.

The HCA work measuring the effects of implementing policies related to behavioral health services for minors are modified to require stakeholder engagement efforts instead of an annual

survey of a sample group. The stakeholder engagement efforts must include live events soliciting feedback from stakeholders and alternative methods stakeholders to submit feedback. The deadline for completing these stakeholder efforts are delayed until October 1, 2022, followed by subsequent efforts completed by July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024. The HCA reports on these efforts are required to occur annually, with a final report due November 1, 2024 (instead of 2022).

A parent or caregiver of a child who received behavioral health services is added to the statewide advisory council for the State Office of Behavioral Health Consumer Advocacy (SOBHCO). The SOBHCO is required to develop and deliver educational programs and information statewide regarding family-initiated treatment and other behavioral health service options for minors. The SOBHCO is required to include behavioral health services for minors in its training and certification process for behavioral health consumer advocates.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2022.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.