



HOUSE BILL 75: School Mental Health Screening Study.

2019-2020 General Assembly

Committee:	House Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	March 4, 2019
Introduced by:	Reps. Torbett, Lewis, Dobson, Bell	Prepared by:	Kristen L. Harris*
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H75-CSBC-4		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *The Proposed Committee Substitute to House Bill 75 would require the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to conduct a study, in collaboration with stakeholders, to determine whether the state should institute a mandatory mental health screen for school children in North Carolina, and, if a screen is advisable, the details of the screening process. The only difference between the PCS and the original bill is the addition of subsection (k) under Section 2.*

CURRENT LAW: Currently, all children in North Carolina are required to receive a health assessment before enrolling in a public school. The current assessment does not specifically mention mental health issues.

BILL ANALYSIS: House Bill 75 would require DHHS and DPI, in collaboration with stakeholders, to conduct a study to recommend a mental health screening process to identify school children at risk of harming themselves or others. The Departments must report the findings of the study to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Resources and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee no later than February 15, 2020. The study must examine the following issues:

- Whether the state should require a mental health screen;
- What mental health professionals should conduct a screen;
- What behaviors or mental health diagnoses a screen should be targeted to identify;
- The format of a screen;
- Whether a screen should be uniform throughout the state or whether there should be general guidelines that are implemented by each local school administrative unit;
- Creation of a policy to ensure that children identified as at-risk by the screen receive the treatment they need;
- Creation of a policy regulating access to the confidential health information generated by a screen;
- The optimal age to implement a screen;
- Whether parents can opt out of a screen;
- Whether professionals conducting the screen should be immune from lawsuits;
- Best practices in other states that perform a screen;
- Any other issues the Departments deem necessary.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act would be effective when it becomes law.

*Staff Attorney Jason Moran-Bates substantially contributed to this summary.

Karen Cochrane-Brown
Director



H 7 5 - S M T U - 6 C S B C - 4 - V - 3

Legislative Analysis
Division
919-733-2578