

1 State of Arkansas  
2 93rd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2021  
4

As Engrossed: H3/29/21

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1689

5 By: Representatives Vaught, Gazaway, M. Gray  
6

## For An Act To Be Entitled

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

### Subtitle

12 TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE STUDY  
13 ON MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH.  
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17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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19 SECTION 1. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. Arkansas Legislative  
20 Study on Mental and Behavioral Health – Creation – Duties.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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33 /s/Vaught

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35 APPROVED: 4/20/21