

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2019-135

2
3 REQUESTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND
4 LABOR STUDY STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE OPIOID CRISIS IN ARKANSAS.
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6 WHEREAS, the leading cause of death for Americans under fifty (50)
7 years of age is drug addiction, with the most prominent being opioid
8 addiction; and
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10 WHEREAS, drug overdose deaths in the United States have tripled since
11 2000, with fifty-two thousand four hundred four (52,404) deaths in 2015 and
12 seventy thousand two hundred thirty-seven (70,237) deaths in 2017; and
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14 WHEREAS, the impact of opioid addiction spans all generations and cuts
15 across all socioeconomic lines; and
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17 WHEREAS, the number of patients presenting with opioid use disorder or
18 substance use disorder in medical clinics, community health centers, and
19 private practices is increasing; and
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21 WHEREAS, patients with opioid use disorder can fall through the cracks
22 of health care, which can lead to missed opportunities for prevention and
23 early intervention, ineffective referrals, incomplete treatment, high rates
24 of hospital and emergency department readmissions, and opioid overdoses that
25 could have been prevented; and
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27 WHEREAS, when left untreated, opioid addiction and opioid misuse can
28 cause serious medical complications and can even be fatal for mothers during
29 or after pregnancy; and
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31 WHEREAS, opioid addiction and opioid misuse during pregnancy is
32 associated with low birth weight, premature delivery, fetal death, and
33 neonatal abstinence syndrome or neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome; and
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35 WHEREAS, dramatic increases in maternal opioid use disorder and
36 neonatal abstinence syndrome or neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome have been

1 recorded since 2004, with a baby born suffering from opioid withdrawal
2 approximately every fifteen (15) minutes; and

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4 WHEREAS, children born suffering from opioid withdrawal may have an
5 impact on the foster care system in a state due parents with opioid use
6 disorder being incarcerated due to drug offenses; and

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8 WHEREAS, to address the epidemic of drug addiction, state lawmakers
9 across the nation are focusing on strategies to combat the opioid crisis that
10 are both timely and uniquely tailored to the needs of their particular state;
11 and

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13 WHEREAS, while Arkansas has made efforts to combat the opioid crisis,
14 the General Assembly should study all available strategies to combat the
15 crisis and determine what strategies would benefit the citizens of Arkansas,

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17 NOW THEREFORE,

18 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR OF
19 THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

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21 THAT the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor study
22 strategies implemented by other states, counties, and municipalities
23 concerning all aspects of the opioid crisis to determine which strategies
24 would benefit the citizens of Arkansas.

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26 BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT, upon request, the following individuals
27 and entities provide assistance to perform this study:

- 28 (1) The Executive Director of the Mental Health Council
29 of Arkansas, Inc.;
- 30 (2) The Executive Director of Recovery Centers of Arkansas,
31 Inc.;
- 32 (3) The Medical Director of the Arkansas Medical Foundation;
- 33 (4) The Program Director for the Substance Abuse Treatment
34 Clinic at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences;
- 35 (5) The Director of Pain Management at CHI-St. Vincent Health
36 System;

- 1 (6) The Chair of the Arkansas State Medical Board Pain
2 Management Review Committee;
- 3 (7) The Arkansas Region 1 Prevention Service Representative;
- 4 (8) The Arkansas Region 8 Prevention Service Representative;
- 5 (9) The Arkansas Drug Director;
- 6 (10) The Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care, Inc.;
- 7 (11) The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement;
- 8 (12) The Arkansas Hospital Association, Inc.;
- 9 (13) The Attorney General;
- 10 (14) The Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police;
- 11 (15) The Arkansas Sheriffs' Association;
- 12 (16) The Arkansas State Medical Board;
- 13 (17) The Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy;
- 14 (18) The Arkansas State Board of Dental Examiners;
- 15 (19) The Arkansas State Board of Nursing;
- 16 (20) The State Board of Optometry;
- 17 (21) The Department of Health;
- 18 (22) The Department of Human Services;
- 19 (23) The Department of Corrections;
- 20 (24) The Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Advisory
21 Committee;
- 22 (25) The Arkansas Board of Podiatric Medicine;
- 23 (26) The Office of Medicaid Inspector General;
- 24 (27) The Speakup About Drugs organization; and
- 25 (28) The Criminal Justice Institute within the University of
26 Arkansas system.

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29 Respectfully submitted,

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33 Representative Justin Boyd
34 District 77
35 Prepared by: JMB/JMB

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