

1 State of Arkansas  
2 94th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2023

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1565

4  
5 By: Representatives Vaught, Evans, Cavanaugh, McCullough, Gazaway, L. Johnson, D. Garner, Hudson,  
6 Pilkington

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

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## For An Act To Be Entitled

10 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE STUDY ON  
11 MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ; AND FOR OTHER  
12 PURPOSES.

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## Subtitle

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TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE STUDY  
ON MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH.

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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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22 SECTION 1. TEMPORARY LANGUAGE. DO NOT CODIFY. Arkansas Legislative  
23 Study on Mental and Behavioral Health – Creation – Duties.

24 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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



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

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

6 (c)(1) The Chair of the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and  
7 Labor and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and  
8 Labor shall call the first meeting for the purpose of beginning the study  
9 within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this act.

10 (2) The House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and  
11 the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor shall meet at least  
12 one (1) time every two (2) months in order to conduct the study but may meet  
13 more often at the call of the Chair of the House Committee on Public Health,  
14 Welfare, and Labor and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Health,  
15 Welfare, and Labor.

16 (d) The purpose of the study is to assess the strengths and weaknesses  
17 of the mental and behavioral health resources and care currently available in  
18 the State of Arkansas and to recommend legislation to the General Assembly  
19 regarding best practices and improvements within the area of mental and  
20 behavioral health care for consideration during the 2025 Regular Session.

21 (e) In order to achieve the purposes of this section, the House  
22 Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Senate Committee on  
23 Public Health, Welfare, and Labor shall study the following:

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

26 (2) Existing mental and behavioral healthcare facilities in this  
27 state;

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

31 (4) Best practices for provision of mental and behavioral health  
32 services;

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

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

36 (7) Transportation of mental and behavioral health patients in

1 Arkansas;

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

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

6 (10) Other matters related to mental and behavioral health  
7 services.

8 (f)(1) On or before October 31, 2024, the House Committee on Public  
9 Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare  
10 and Labor shall file with the Legislative Council a final written report of  
11 their activities, findings, and recommendations.

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

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