



HEALTHY MINDS  
POLICY INITIATIVE

## Aligning Mental Health Spending and Strategies

SB 295 by Sen. Simpson, Sen. Haste and Rep. McEntire

*Mental health issues impact a broad range of state services and activities – but these services are often siloed. This bill identifies and breaks down siloes in state government by: 1) analyzing all spending and funding associated with mental health in 11 agencies; 2) building a multi-agency strategy for aligning these resources and improving care, and 3) linking future budget requests to the multi-agency strategy.*

**Mental health is bigger than one agency — especially amid a pandemic mental health crisis for schools, child welfare, corrections and others. The bill lists 11 key agencies:**

- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- State Department of Health
- Health Care Authority
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- State Department of Education
- Career and Technical Education
- State Regents of Higher Education
- Department of Corrections
- Office of Juvenile Affairs
- Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

### Better-informed policy debates, more transparency

- Our understanding of what Oklahoma spends on mental health comes from one agency's budget and often excludes federal funding. **This is incomplete and misleading.**
- Mental health policy debates would be **better-informed**, with a clearer picture of what legislators have invested across all agencies.
- We need to **uncover overlapping or incongruent spending or strategies** across our government siloes at this critical time. Mental health uniquely touches nearly everything we do, from public safety to child welfare.

### Improved coordination, efficiencies, outcomes

- SB 295 calls for a one-time, limited-duration council to evaluate resources and develop a 5-year, multi-agency **strategic plan for aligning strategies** across pockets of mental health resources. This council will be led by experts, not politics.
- In future years, these agencies will work together to align budget requests according to shared metrics around **reducing redundancies, improving outcomes and increasing access.**
- North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas have pursued similar models. One state's multi-agency audit resulted in a unified appropriations request for all mental health funding across agencies. This has resulted in **more targeted and strategically-aligned spending.**