

2021 Oklahoma Legislature: MENTAL HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES



HEALTHY MINDS
POLICY INITIATIVE



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Nonpartisan, data-driven research and long-term, strategic thinking about Oklahoma's mental health and addiction challenges.

We envision effective, efficient mental health systems that improve health, economic, education and criminal justice outcomes.

A global pandemic continues increasing depression, anxiety, addiction deaths and childhood trauma in Oklahoma to unprecedented levels, and the impacts could be with us for years.

Fortunately, early wins in the 2020 session set us on right path to combat this crisis. The 2021 Oklahoma Legislature can continue this momentum by taking advantage of key opportunities identified by Healthy Minds Policy Initiative and legislative leaders.

TELEHEALTH EXPANSION: SB 674 by Sen. McCortney and Rep. McEntire expands access to telehealth services by ensuring medically-appropriate health and mental health care delivered by telehealth is reimbursed and treated equally.

- **Future steps:** Continue to implement mental health parity in Oklahoma

MULTI-AGENCY SPENDING AND STRATEGY: SB 295 by Sens. Simpson and Haste and Rep. McEntire calls for an analysis of mental health spending across state agencies and requires inter-agency strategic collaboration on mental health services across state government.

- **Future steps:** Coordinated strategy for state resources in mental health

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH DATA: HB 1103 by Rep. Mark Vancuren and Sen. Haste expands use of an evidence-based survey providing a critically-needed glimpse into children's trauma, mental health and social-emotional learning needs in the wake of COVID-19.

- **Future steps:** More coordinated mental health efforts in schools.

REINVESTING ODMHSAS SAVINGS:

Amid a time of critical need for mental health services, Oklahoma has a unique opportunity to reinvest up to **\$29 million** in savings generated in mental health services due to Medicaid expansion. These funds would support crisis and criminal justice diversion.

- **Future steps:** Community savings from less inpatient and law enforcement utilization

HARM REDUCTION: HB 1005 by Rep. Bush and **SB 511** by Sen. Montgomery improve access to evidence-based services that reduce the prevalence of used syringes in Oklahoma communities while connecting individuals with addiction to appropriate care. The bill supports first-responders and empowers medical professionals as COVID-19 increases addiction statewide.

- **Future steps:** Data-collection and verification on service improvements

Other High-Profile Issues in Mental Health



MEDICAID AND COMMERCIAL MANAGED CARE:

Medicaid expansion will extend care to more people with mental health and addiction issues. Supporters of commercial managed care organizations (MCOs) argue care management and value-based care are important for costs and outcomes. Although this is true, independent analyses suggest MCOs have difficulty generating outcomes for people with mental illness. Value-based care already occurring at ODMHSAS has helped save taxpayers at least \$261 million since 2012.



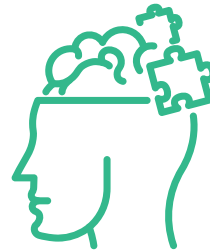
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH:

Recognizing the childhood mental health needs caused by COVID-19, several legislators are addressing children's mental health in schools. Key bills include data collection through **HB 1103**; teacher training through **HB 1773**; school-based trainings and education through **SB 21**, **SB 89**, **HB 1027**, **HB 1686**, and **HB 1568**; and other proposals that focus on mental health personnel in schools.



POLICE AND FIRST RESPONDERS:

Supporting first responders is an important goal in 2021, with positive implications for mental health. One proposal likely to appear in multiple bills would shift responsibility for **mental health transports** from police to a contractor, alleviating strain on systems. Public safety districts, **HB 1970** and **SB 838**, could boost local resources for police and mental health diversion, while **SB 87** highlights police-led diversion programs. Several bills also address officer training.



BREAKING BARRIERS:

Numerous bills seek to improve access to mental health or addiction treatment via telehealth or other methods. **SB 674**, for example, extends temporary COVID-19 telehealth innovations, while **HB 1005** and **SB 511** increase access to addiction treatment. **HB 1740** would allow more access to substance use disorder treatment information in hospital emergency rooms, and **SB 902** would help ensure health coverage for people re-entering society from prison.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Healthy Minds is here to support policymakers with data-driven, evidence-based solutions with an eye for taxpayer efficiencies and effective services. Our team of researchers can respond to requests for policy research and data. We are about giving credit, not taking it.

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