



HEALTHY MINDS  
POLICY INITIATIVE

## Aligning Mental Health Spending and Strategy

SB 295 by Sen. Haste and Rep. McEntire

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

***45% of Oklahomans had depression or anxiety symptoms during the pandemic, and these individuals interact with all state services and agencies. To address this mental health crisis, fostering greater agency collaboration becomes increasingly imperative for the health of Oklahomans.***

**Mental health is bigger than one agency — especially amid a pandemic mental health crisis for schools, child welfare, corrections and others. The bill lists 12 key agencies:**

- Mental Health & 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
- Department of Public Safety
- Office of Juvenile Affairs
- Oklahoma Commission on Children & 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 agency coordination** around mental health services, aiming to fill the gaps between systems. 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**.