

Mental Health Care Study Amendments

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Stewart E. Barlow

Senate Sponsor: Jen Plumb

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to issue a request for proposals to conduct a study.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- requires the Department of Health and Human Services to issue a request for proposals to conduct a study on wait times and barriers for a child to see a therapist.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

26B-5-613, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **26B-5-613** is enacted to read:

26B-5-613 . Mental health access study.

(1) The department shall issue a request for proposals for a person to conduct a comprehensive study of wait times and barriers to accessing pediatric mental health care in Utah, which shall:

(a) measure and analyze the average time between a child's initial referral to a mental health appointment and the date of the first available appointment;

(b) identify factors affecting wait times, including:

(i) geographic location;

- 29 (ii) insurance type;
30 (iii) provider availability;
31 (iv) specialty care needs; and
32 (v) other relevant barriers to access;
33 (c) compare wait times across different:
34 (i) geographic regions of the state;
35 (ii) types of mental health providers;
36 (iii) practice settings; and
37 (iv) payment models;
38 (d) include both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods; and
39 (e) survey parents regarding experiences accessing care.
40 (2) The person selected for the study shall:
41 (a) develop appropriate methods to collect data while protecting patient privacy;
42 (b) comply with all applicable state and federal privacy laws; and
43 (c) ensure all data is deidentified before inclusion in any reports.
44 (3) The person selected for the study shall submit to the Health and Human Services
45 Interim Committee and the Behavioral Health Commission created Section 26B-5-702:
46 (a) a preliminary report of findings before May 31, 2026; and
47 (b) a final report, including policy recommendations, before May 31, 2027.
48 Section 2. **Effective Date.**
49 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.