

## **HB20-1006: EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTANTS**

Concerning creation of a statewide program of early childhood mental health consultation.

### Details

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<b>Bill Sponsors:</b>	House – <i>McCluskie (D) and Sirota (D)</i> Senate – <i>Pettersen (D) and Story (D)</i>
<b>Committee:</b>	House Public Health Care & Human Services House Appropriations
<b>Bill History:</b>	1/8/2020- Introduced in House 1/24/2020- House Public Health Care & Human Services Refer Amended to Appropriations
<b>Next Action:</b>	Hearing in House Appropriations
<b>Fiscal Note:</b>	<u><a href="#">1/22/2020</a></u>

### Bill Summary

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This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop and implement a statewide program of mental health consultation by July 1, 2022. The program is intended to increase the number of qualified mental health consultants supporting professionals who work with young children and to give guidance and support to families, caregivers, and providers in addressing the social-emotional developmental needs of children through age eight. In developing the program, the DHS must create:

- a model of consultation that includes qualifications, outcome, and job expectations for mental health consultants, and guidance on ratios between consultants and the setting they support
- a professional development plan to support mental health consultants in meeting expectations
- a publicly accessible website that lists mental health consultants that meet dictated qualifications and competencies
- a data collection and information system to analyze implementation and outcomes of the program

The bill also requires the DHS to present to the General Assembly in the department's annual SMART Act<sup>1</sup> hearing on the number of available and needed mental health consultants and any adjustments needed to meet the consultants' targeted caseload. Finally, the bill requires the DHS and the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to explore funding options for the program and report their findings to the Joint Budget Committee by January 1, 2022.

### Issue Summary

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#### **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation**

There are three ways that Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultants can deliver their services.<sup>2</sup> The consultant can provide direct consultation with parents and child and family providers on behavior management, positive guidance and emotion regulation strategies for a specific child. ECMH consultants can also work with providers at the classroom level for classroom management as well as activities that support social emotional development for all children. That work can be expanded to consultation and resources for program directors and providers on self-care, positive guidance curriculum/philosophies, and skill building.

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<sup>1</sup> Enacted in 2010 and extensively revised in 2013, Colorado's SMART Government Act includes requirements for state departments to create publicly-available annual strategic/performance plans and present them to the General Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> Colorado Office of Early Childhood, Department of Human Services (2019). *Early Childhood Mental Health*. Retrieved from [http://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/ecsr\\_ecmh.pdf](http://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/ecsr_ecmh.pdf)

The Smart Support program in Arizona, an infant and early childhood mental health consultation system, found statistically significant improvement in outcomes such as classroom mental health climate, child risk of expulsion, child self-regulation, teacher-child relationships, in addition to other outcome measures.<sup>3</sup> The following graphic from the Colorado Office of Early Childhood illustrates the various outcomes from ECMH consulting.<sup>1</sup>

Providers	Parents	Children
<p><b>Increased</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher well-being</li> <li>• Understanding of child development</li> <li>• Teacher satisfaction and confidence</li> <li>• Ability to address behavioral concerns</li> <li>• Positive and supportive learning environments</li> </ul> <p><b>Decreased</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Burnout</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increased</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent well-being</li> <li>• Consistency in supportive care</li> <li>• Nurturing interactions</li> <li>• Positive interactions with the teacher</li> </ul> <p><b>Decreased</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early pick ups</li> <li>• Missed work days</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increased</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child well-being</li> <li>• Friendships</li> <li>• Self-soothing</li> <li>• Listening skills</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Early identification of mental health or developmental delays</li> </ul> <p><b>Decreased</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioral Concerns</li> <li>• Suspensions &amp; Expulsions</li> </ul>

### Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant Qualifications

The Substance Abuse and Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has outlined the ideal qualifications for an ECMH consultant in different contexts.<sup>4</sup> For example, the suggested qualifications in a statewide program include the following:

- Master's degree in a mental health or related human services field;
- Preferably licensed or eligible to be licensed in that specific mental health field
- Minimum of 2 years post-master's experience related to mental health, social-emotional development, early childhood, and/or early childhood education

### Supporters

- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado Psychiatric Society
- Florence Crittenton Services
- Kempe Foundation for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse
- Mental Health Colorado
- The Arc of Colorado

### Opponents

- No opposition has been made public at time of publication.

### About this Brief

This brief was prepared by Health District of Northern Larimer County staff to assist the Health District Board of Directors in determining whether to take an official stand on various health-related issues. The Health District is a special district of the northern two-thirds of Larimer County, Colorado, supported by local property tax dollars and governed by a publicly elected five-member board. The Health District provides medical, mental health, dental, preventive and health planning services to the communities it serves. This brief is not a complete analysis of this policy

<sup>3</sup> Shivers, E.M. (2015). *Arizona's Smart Support Evaluation Report: The First Four Years*. Institute for Child Development Research & Social Change, Indigo Cultural Center Inc. Retrieved from [http://www.swhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Smart-Support\\_FNL\\_web.pdf](http://www.swhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Smart-Support_FNL_web.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Substance Abuse and Health Services Administration (n.d.) *Qualifications of an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant*. Retrieved from [https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs\\_campaigns/IECMHC/qualifications-infant-early-childhood-mental-health-consultant.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/IECMHC/qualifications-infant-early-childhood-mental-health-consultant.pdf)

issue. This brief is accurate to staff knowledge as of date printed. For more information about this brief or the Health District, please contact Alyson Williams, Policy Coordinator, at (970) 224-5209, or e-mail at [awilliams@healthdistrict.org](mailto:awilliams@healthdistrict.org).