

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 983

Short Title: Peer Wellness Center Pilot Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Insko, Belk, Harrison, and Hawkins (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, Health and Human Services, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 26, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE STATE FUNDS AND FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER THE
MENTAL HEALTH BLOCK GRANT FOR TWO PILOT PEER WELLNESS CENTERS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) There is appropriated from federal Mental Health Block Grant funds the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for fiscal year 2020-2021 to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (Department), to be used to fund a two-year Peer Wellness Center pilot program. The Peer Wellness Center pilot program shall consist of two Peer Wellness Centers, one of which is located in a rural community, and one of which is located in an urban community. The Peer Wellness Centers shall serve individuals with severe mental illness, irrespective of the funding sources available to the individual. The Peer Wellness Centers shall (i) provide a social and educational setting that functions as a mutual-support, self-help, and health-promotion environment, (ii) reduce the need to crisis services and hospitalizations, and (iii) offer social connections to improve transitional outcomes. The Peer Wellness Centers shall also do all of the following:

- (1) Offer services and supports that enhance mental health recovery, reduce the need for hospitalization, and that are not covered by Medicaid.
- (2) Be owned, operated, and staffed by peer facilitators who are North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialists and are trained to facilitate wellness programming in support of mental health recovery and to promote community integration for the individuals served.
- (3) Receive referrals of individuals from advocacy resources, mental health service providers, hospitals, and other community entities.

SECTION 1.(b) The Department shall accept competitive grant proposals for the pilot Peer Wellness Centers for a period of 180 days after this act becomes law. Grant proposals shall describe how the proposal will meet all of the following goals and objectives for individuals served through the Peer Wellness Center:

- (1) Improve physical and mental wellness.
- (2) Reduce the rate of hospitalizations.
- (3) Reduce the use of crisis services.
- (4) Increase the rate of successful adaptation to community living for individuals participating in the Department's Transitions to Community Living Initiative.



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1 **SECTION 1.(c)** The grantees selected by the Department to be the pilot Peer
2 Wellness Centers shall collect data on all of the following:

- 3 (1) Outcomes for individuals served by the Peer Wellness Center, measured
4 utilizing the eight dimensions of wellness model, which is an integrated health
5 care framework defined through research and endorsed by the Substance
6 Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
7 (2) The use of hospitals and crisis support measures by individuals while being
8 served by the Peer Wellness Center.
9 (3) The number of episodes of urgent support needed by individuals while being
10 served by the Peer Wellness Center.
11 (4) The number of individuals served by the Peer Wellness Center who were also
12 participating in the Transitions to Community Living Initiative.

13 **SECTION 1.(d)** Upon completion of the Peer Wellness Center pilot program, each
14 grantee shall report to the Department the data collected under subsection (c) of this section.
15 Within six months after receiving the reports from the grantees, and upon review of those reports,
16 the Department shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and
17 Human Services with recommendations regarding (i) the effectiveness and functionality of the
18 pilot Peer Wellness Centers and (ii) whether to expand the Peer Wellness Center pilot program
19 statewide.

20 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2019.