

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

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SENATE BILL 549

Short Title: Child Welfare/Behavioral Health Pilot/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Krawiec (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 3, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A CHILD WELFARE/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PILOT PROGRAM AND APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Pilot created. – The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, in collaboration with the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, shall establish a two-year child welfare and behavioral health pilot project that will provide easier access to comprehensive health services for children in foster care by (i) creating better continuity of care, (ii) providing an alternative to therapeutic foster care, and (iii) ensuring care and services are available without disruption to a child's foster care placement while accessing services needed to treat the child's trauma. Four counties shall participate in the pilot project, which shall include Davie, Forsyth, Rockingham, and Stokes.

SECTION 2. Purpose. – The purpose of the pilot project is to establish a trauma-informed integrated health foster care model to facilitate partnerships between county departments of social services and local management entities/managed care organizations (LME/MCOs) regarding children placed in foster care that will do the following:

- (1) Address safety and health needs of children with the application of trauma informed tools.
- (2) Address appropriate preventive and medical care for children placed in foster care.
- (3) Address other social determinants of health, specifically those related to education and social development.
- (4) Meet the goals of Medicaid Transformation, Child Welfare Reform, and the federal Families First Prevention Services Act (Family First Act).
- (5) Provide for collaboration across agencies, including private behavioral health providers, health systems, and agencies of social determinants of health.
- (6) Allow for the development of alternative funding models and service definitions.
- (7) Allow for behavioral health services in family foster homes augmented with mental health services.
- (8) Allow for wrap-around services for the child to support a singular, unified goal of children in foster care having a single placement.
- (9) Assign dedicated care coordination to each county social services agency.

SECTION 3. Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, the sum of three hundred



1 thousand dollars (\$300,000) for each year of the 2019-2021 fiscal biennium to implement the
2 child welfare and behavioral health pilot project established by this act. These funds shall be used
3 to (i) provide technical assistance and consultation to the counties participating in the pilot project
4 to build upon capacity and skills to utilize trauma assessments, case planning, and service
5 interventions and (ii) evaluate the pilot project to determine the viability of statewide
6 implementation.

7 **SECTION 4.** Report. – The Division of Social Services and the Division of Mental
8 Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services shall submit a report to the
9 Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services by October 1, 2022, that,
10 at a minimum, includes each of the following:

- 11 (1) The average cost of providing alternatives to therapeutic foster care.
- 12 (2) An outline of enhanced services offered and developed during the pilot
13 project, including barriers and challenges.
- 14 (3) The outcomes achieved from the pilot project.
- 15 (4) A plan outlining the potential for replication across other counties, including
16 cost-modeling recommendations.

17 **SECTION 5.** Effective date. – This act becomes effective July 1, 2019.