

House Bill 7

By: Representatives Scott of the 76th, Davis of the 87th, Carter of the 93rd, Taylor of the 92nd, Jones of the 60th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 2 of Chapter 1 of Title 37 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to the powers and duties of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental
3 Disabilities regarding the governing and regulation of mental health, so as to provide for the
4 establishment of a school-linked behavioral health grant program; to provide a definition; to
5 provide for eligible applicants; to provide for allowable activities and related expenses; to
6 provide for data collection and outcome measurement; to provide for related matters; to
7 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Article 2 of Chapter 1 of Title 37 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
11 powers and duties of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
12 regarding the governing and regulation of mental health, is amended by adding a new Code
13 section to read as follows:

14 "37-1-30.

15 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'mental health or substance use disorder' means
16 a mental illness or addictive disease.

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17 (b) Subject to available appropriations or other funding, the department shall establish a
18 school-linked behavioral health grant program to provide early identification of and
19 intervention for students with mental health or substance use disorder needs and to build
20 the capacity of K-12 schools to support students with mental health or substance use
21 disorder needs in the classroom.

22 (c) An eligible applicant for a school-linked behavioral health grant is an entity or provider
23 that is:

24 (1) A community service board;

25 (2) A community mental health center;

26 (3) A licensed healthcare provider who primarily provides treatment or diagnosis of
27 mental health or substance use disorders; and

28 (4) A Medicaid provider that employs licensed healthcare providers who provide
29 treatment or diagnosis of mental health or substance use disorders to children and
30 families.

31 (d) Allowable grant activities and related expenses may include but shall not be limited
32 to:

33 (1) Identifying and diagnosing mental health conditions or substance use disorders of
34 students;

35 (2) Delivering mental health or substance use disorder treatment and services to students
36 and their families, including via telehealth;

37 (3) Supporting families in meeting their child's needs, including navigating healthcare,
38 social services, and the juvenile justice system;

39 (4) Providing transportation for students receiving school-linked behavioral health
40 services when school is not in session;

41 (5) Building the capacity of schools to meet the needs of students with mental health or
42 substance use disorder concerns, including school staff development activities for
43 licensed and nonlicensed staff; and

44 (6) Purchasing equipment, connection charges, on-site coordination, set-up fees, and site
45 fees in order to deliver school-linked behavioral health services via telehealth.

46 (e) Grantees shall obtain all available third-party reimbursement sources as a condition of
47 receiving a grant. For purposes of this grant program, a third-party reimbursement source
48 excludes a local school system. Grantees shall serve students regardless of health coverage
49 status or ability to pay.

50 (f) Grantees shall provide data to the department for the purpose of evaluating the
51 effectiveness of the school-linked behavioral health grant program."

52 **SECTION 2.**

53 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.