



# HOUSE BILL 855: Strengthening Care for Families and Children.

2023-2024 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>	House Health. If favorable, re-refer to Appropriations. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	<b>Date:</b>	May 30, 2023
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. Lambeth, Sasser, K. Baker, Cunningham	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Jason Moran-Bates
<b>Analysis of:</b>	First Edition		Committee Staff

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**OVERVIEW:** House Bill 855 would appropriate \$1 billion in nonrecurring, non-reverting funds for the 2023-25 fiscal biennium from the ARPA Temporary Savings Fund to (1) transform child welfare and family well-being, (2) strengthen the North Carolina Behavioral Crisis System, (3) fund community and school-based behavioral health, (4) fund justice-related behavioral health matters, (5) improve the capacity of state psychiatric facilities, (6) improve behavioral health data technology, and (7) increase Medicaid rates.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** House Bill 855 would appropriate \$1 billion in nonrecurring, non-reverting funds for the 2023-25 fiscal biennium from the ARPA Temporary Savings Fund to various divisions in of the Department of Health and Human Services as follows:

- Division of Child and Family Well-Being:
  - \$8 million to expand access to family partners capable of supporting the caregivers of children with high behavioral health needs.
  - \$16 million to strengthen and expand specialized behavioral health treatment options in community, residential, and inpatient settings for children.
  - \$11 million to launch community assessment teams to facilitate the provision of behavioral health services to children within their communities.
  - \$40 million to be used in collaboration with the Department of Public Instruction to address the challenges and implement the strategies outlined in the NC Unified School Behavioral Health Action Plan dated March 2023.
- Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services:
  - \$21 million for behavioral health mobile crisis teams to address the needs to children experiencing a behavioral health crisis.
  - \$11 million to increase the number of youth crisis stabilization beds available statewide and to create reserve crisis stabilization bed capacity.
  - \$20 million for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.
  - \$20 million to be used as start-up funding for new mobile crisis teams throughout the state.
  - \$60 million to develop new behavioral health urgent care and facility-based crisis combination facilities, peer drop-in facilities, and additional North Carolina Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources and Treatment (NC START) respite locations.

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- \$80 million for a pilot program transporting individuals needing psychiatric hospitalization from hospital emergency departments to inpatient facilities.
- \$20 million to be used for housing supports for individuals with serious mental illness.
- \$38 million to be used to expand the number of certified community behavioral health clinics in the state.
- \$10 million to be used for an education campaign to reduce stigma around mental health.
- \$30 million for the development of a workforce training center that provides training to behavioral health and intellectual and developmental disabilities providers.
- \$108 million to operate community-based pre-arrest diversion and reentry programs and to fund local partnerships between law enforcement, counties, and behavioral health providers.
- \$40 million to operate both community-based and detention center-based restoration programs.
- \$2 million to be used for judicial education programs designed to increase understanding of mental health issues and behavioral health treatment options.
- \$30 million to be used to support adults with lengthy or repeated stays at state-operated psychiatric hospitals.
- \$40 million to recruit and retain the healthcare workforce at state-operated healthcare facilities.
- \$27 million to implement electronic medical records in all state-operated healthcare facilities.
- \$3 million to purchase automated medication 22 dispensing cabinets at state-operated healthcare facilities.
- \$20 million to expand the centralized bed registry.
- \$10 million to provide funding and technological assistance to behavioral healthcare providers related to the modernization of data and technology, including funds to assist with connection to the Health Information Exchange.
- Division of Social Services:
  - \$6 million to provide Division-based supports for families, including professional foster parenting programs.
  - \$16 million to provide funding for intensive supports in the community.
  - \$10 million to strengthen and expand the child welfare workforce.
- Division of Health Benefits:
  - \$7 million to increase connections between primary care providers and psychiatry services.
  - \$225 million to increase rates paid to Medicaid behavioral healthcare providers for a period of three years.
- Division of Central Management and Support, Office of Rural Health:

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- \$50 million to expand the North Carolina Loan Repayment Program to include licensed providers of behavioral health services.
- \$20 million to increase access to telehealth services in rural and underserved areas of the state.

\$1 million of the funds being appropriated must be allocated for administrative purposes, and DHHS is authorized to create up to 48 time-limited positions. The funds will become available as they are deposited into the ARPA Temporary Savings Fund, established under Section 1.3 of S.L. 2023-7. DHHS must report quarterly to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services on the use of the funds appropriated beginning January 1, 2024. This requirement will sunset with the submission of a final report, which is due no later than 90 days after all the funds have been fully expended.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The provisions appropriating the funds will be effective the later of July 1, 2023, or when the 2023 Appropriations Act becomes law. The provisions directing how the funds are to be used become effective when the bill becomes law.