

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 1048*
Committee Substitute Favorable 6/4/20

Short Title: CPS Intake Screening/PED Recommendations.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 30, 2020

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROHIBIT COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES FROM IMPLEMENTING CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES INTAKE SCREENING CRITERIA THAT IS MORE STRINGENT OR LENIENT THAN, OR IN ADDITION TO, STATE POLICY AND TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO MAKE VARIOUS POLICY CHANGES AS A MEANS TO IMPROVE THE CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES INTAKE SCREENING PROCESS, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 3 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 7B-300.1. No county supplementation of certain State policy.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, a county department of social services may not supplement child protective services intake screening criteria with county policy that is more stringent or more lenient than, or in addition to, State policy."

SECTION 2.(a) Rapid Consultation System. – As a means of improving State child protective services intake screening guidance to county departments of social services, the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (Division), shall implement a rapid consultation system to provide consultation to counties when making decisions regarding the safety of children. Specifically, the rapid consultation system shall consist of a telephone line that a county director or their designee can access at any time when the county has concerns regarding the correct screening decision, assessment track, or applicable response time frame for a specific case. Upon receiving a request, Division staff shall consult with the county department of social services within 24 hours of receipt of the request and at least two Division staff workers shall consult on each call to ensure the advice conveyed is consistent.

SECTION 2.(b) Report. – The Division of Social Services shall implement the rapid consultation system required by this section no later than June 30, 2021, and submit a report on its implementation to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services by December 31, 2021.

SECTION 3.(a) Assessment of Worker Comprehension and Training Needs. – The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (Division), shall periodically assess county department of social services workers' and supervisors' comprehension and correct implementation of State policy and their training needs regarding the screening of reports of alleged child maltreatment. The Division shall assess comprehension and training



1 needs by use of hypothetical vignettes or other assessment tools the Division deems appropriate.
2 Every three years, the Division shall require retraining for all child welfare workers, including
3 supervisors and other workers who occasionally screen child maltreatment reports. The Division
4 shall also require all child welfare supervisors to pass a competency pass/fail test prior to
5 providing screening decisions or on-call duties.

6 **SECTION 3.(b)** Report. – The Division of Social Services shall implement the
7 assessment and training requirements of this section by December 31, 2020, and submit a report
8 on its use of those training requirements to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health
9 and Human Services by June 30, 2021.

10 **SECTION 4.(a)** Structured Intake Form Revisions. – The Department of Health and
11 Human Services, Division of Social Services (Division), in consultation with the Children's
12 Research Center or a similar organization, shall revise the child protective services structured
13 intake form, which is a tool county departments of social services use to screen reports of alleged
14 child maltreatment. The Division shall revise the form to ensure, at a minimum, it (i) continues
15 to meet federal and State requirements and (ii) provides consistency for use statewide. The
16 Division shall further ensure the structured intake form is recertified every five years and shall
17 continue to consult with the Children's Research Center or a similar organization when State
18 policy changes require modifications to the structured intake form.

19 **SECTION 4.(b)** Report. – Beginning July 30, 2020, the Division of Social Services
20 shall report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services
21 (Committee) on its process of revising the structured intake form in accordance with this section
22 and continue reporting to the Committee every six months thereafter until revisions are complete.

23 **SECTION 5.(a)** Program Monitoring. – For purposes of better evaluating individual
24 county departments of social services, the Department of Health and Human Services, Division
25 of Social Services (Division), shall implement statistically valid program monitoring for county
26 intake screening procedures, as well as establish measurable performance benchmarks. The
27 Division shall establish measurable and consistent intake screening benchmarks that can be
28 applied to all counties, with the Division performing county data reviews for intake screening at
29 least once each year beginning no later than December 31, 2024. The Division shall oversee
30 intake screening by performing valid sampling and ensure program monitoring intake screening
31 reviews collect sample sizes large enough to achieve a county confidence level of at least ninety
32 percent (90%), with a margin of error of plus or minus five percent (5%).

33 **SECTION 5.(b)** Report. – Beginning June 30, 2021, and continuing each year
34 thereafter until December 31, 2024, the Division of Social Services shall report to the Joint
35 Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services on its progress toward
36 improved program monitoring and continuous quality improvement in accordance with this
37 section.

38 **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law.