

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 1159

Short Title: Investing in Teen Mental Health. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Lofton, Lambeth, White, and Crawford (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

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

May 4, 2026

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING, TO EXPAND ACCESS TO TEEN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING.

Whereas, ten percent (10%) of North Carolina's high school students reported having attempted suicide in the last year and twenty-two percent (22%) of these same students reported having seriously contemplated suicide; and

Whereas, 1 in 5 teens in the United States will likely experience a mental health challenge by the age of 18 and sixty-four percent (64%) of these teens are unlikely to seek professional help; and

Whereas, Teen Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based course developed to teach teens who are in grades nine through twelve, or ages 14 through 18, how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among their friends and peers; and

Whereas, the Teen MHFA curriculum covers common signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges in this age group and how to connect teens with trusted and responsible adults for support and assistance during a mental health or substance use crisis; and

Whereas, The University of North Carolina has trained a total of 7,527 individuals in Youth and Teen MHFA in 44 counties across NC and established a cohort of 212 Youth and/or Teen MHFA instructors since 2023; and

Whereas, completion of the Teen MHFA course has shown a fifty percent (50%) increase in the willingness of teens to tell someone and seek help from an adult or health care professional about mental health and substance use challenges; Now, therefore, The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child and Family Well-Being, the sum of one million two hundred ninety thousand six hundred twenty-six dollars (\$1,290,626) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to expand access to Teen Mental Health First Aid training and Youth Mental Health First Aid training in North Carolina.

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2026.

