
**Human Services, Youth, & Early
Learning Committee**

HB 2256

Brief Description: Addressing the children and youth behavioral health work group.

Sponsors: Representatives Callan, Eslick, Senn, Davis, Paul, Thai, Ormsby, Pollet and Macri.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies membership and requirements for the children and youth behavioral health work group (work group).
- Delays the deadline for the work group Strategic Plan Advisory Group to submit a draft strategic plan regarding behavioral health from October 1, 2024, to August 1, 2025.
- Extends the expiration of the work group from December 30, 2026, to December 30, 2027.

Hearing Date: 1/17/24

Staff: Luke Wickham

Background:

Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group.

The children and youth behavioral health work group (work group) was established to identify barriers to, and opportunities for, accessing behavioral health services for children and their families and advise the Legislature on statewide behavioral health services for those children and families. There are 38 members of this work group, including legislators, representatives from state agencies, providers, parent and child representatives, and advocates.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The co-chairs of the work group are selected by the work group members and must include one legislative member and one executive branch member. At the direction of the co-chairs of the work group, the work group may convene advisory groups to evaluate specific issues and report related findings and recommendations to the full work group. The work group is required to convene an advisory group for the purpose of developing a behavioral health strategic plan. This strategic plan advisory committee must complete the strategic plan by October 1, 2024.

The work group must submit annual recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. The work group expires December 30, 2026.

Summary of Bill:

The goals of the children and youth behavioral health work group (work group) are expanded to include strengthening and building a coordinated systemic approach to providing behavioral health care and supports that ensure that all children, youth, young adults, and their families have timely access to high quality, equitable, well-resourced behavioral health education, care, and supports across the continuum when and where they need it, including prenatal care.

Modifies the membership of the work group to:

- allow the Governor to appoint additional representatives from state agencies;
- include three youth or young adult representatives who have experience with behavioral health issues as members;
- allow the co-chairs of the work group to request that the Governor appoint additional members.

Modifies the identification of work group co-chairs to specify the non-legislative co-chair must be the representative from the Health Care Authority (current law allows the non-legislative co-chair to be selected from among the executive branch members).

The requirements of the work group are expanded to include determining the:

- strategies and resources needed to achieve parity of private health insurance coverage for behavioral health conditions with the coverage provided for other health conditions; and
- length of work group member terms.

The strategic plan advisory group draft strategic plan is modified to remove an incremental action plan outlining the action steps needed to achieve the vision provided by the draft strategic plan, clear prioritization criteria, and a transparent evaluation plan. This strategic plan must be developed in coordination with the Joint Legislative and Executive Committee on Behavioral Health and the Department of Health in relation to the implementation of the 988 Crisis Hotline. The deadline for the advisory group to submit this strategic plan is delayed from October 1, 2024, to August 1, 2025.

The expiration of the Work Group is delayed from December 30, 2026, to December 30, 2027.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2024.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.