

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/SB 1620 — Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Rouson

The bill strengthens Florida’s Mental Health Act by codifying recommendations made by Florida’s Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder. The bill makes the following specific changes to Florida’s Mental Health Act:

- Defines person-first language to mean language used in a professional medical setting must emphasize the patient as a person rather than his or her disability or illness and requires use and promotion of person-first language as the standard in professional behavioral health settings.
- Requires the continued promotion of best practices in crisis intervention and trauma-informed care.
- Requires that individualized treatment plans be updated every 30 days that the patient is in a receiving or treatment facility, with those patients in a facility longer than 24 months having plans updated every 60 days.
- Requires the use and statewide integration of the Daily Living Activities-20 (DLA-20) functional assessment tool.
- Requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF), in consultation with the Department of Education (DOE), to conduct a biennial review of school-based behavioral health services and behavioral health telehealth access.
- Requires the DCF to conduct biennial reviews and the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to prioritize licensing for short-term residential treatment facilities in underserved counties and high-need areas.

The bill also clarifies the role of the Florida Center for Behavioral Health Workforce at the University of South Florida’s Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute to allow the center to request depersonalized information held by the Boards of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling to better research and develop strategies for behavioral health workforce enhancement.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

Vote: Senate 34-3; House 116-0