

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH30370-LUa-86

Short Title: Standardized Assessment/Foster Care Pilot. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Dobson, Potts, and White (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROJECT FOCUSED ON STANDARDIZED
3 SCREENING AND ASSESSMENTS FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE AND TO
4 APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE.

5 Whereas, North Carolina does not have a uniform, standardized process to conduct a
6 quality, comprehensive assessment when a child is removed from the child's home by a county
7 department of social services; and

8 Whereas, removing a child from the child's home creates adverse traumatic
9 experiences for the child and the family; and

10 Whereas, the State of North Carolina is responsible for the care and protection,
11 including physical and behavioral health needs, for children in custody; and

12 Whereas, Benchmarks has piloted a three-county department of social services,
13 private behavioral health provider and local management entities/managed care organizations
14 (LME/MCOs) partnership to develop and implement an evidence-based, trauma-informed
15 assessment for children coming into foster care; and

16 Whereas, data from the pilot shows that early intervention through proper screening
17 and assessment decreases the utilization of the emergency room, crisis management, and
18 residential treatment placements while cutting Medicaid costs by up to forty-four percent (44%)
19 per child 12 months after entering custody; Now, therefore,
20 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

21 **SECTION 1.** Pilot Created. – There is created a pilot project to develop a
22 standardized process for every child, four years of age and older, entering into foster care to
23 receive a standardized, trauma and evidence-informed screening and assessment to ensure an
24 appropriate diagnosis, which will in turn lead to the proper provision of services for the child.
25 Up to three local management entities/managed care organizations (LME/MCOs) shall
26 participate in the pilot project. The LME/MCOs shall collaborate with their county departments
27 of social services in up to four counties within the LME/MCOs' catchment areas on developing
28 and implementing the standardized screening and assessments, with the intent that (i) by July 1,
29 2019, the LME/MCOs and their county departments of social services begin training for
30 implementation of the assessments and (ii) by February 1, 2020, the LME/MCOs and county
31 departments of social services begin conducting the assessments. The pilot shall include support
32 for the LME/MCOs and county departments of social services for training in trauma-focused care
33 and the use of the screening and assessment tool. For providers, the pilot shall provide ongoing
34 oversight, training, certification, and coaching to ensure fidelity to the screening and assessment
35 model. For purposes of this act, "trauma" is defined as the result of an event, series of events, or
36 set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or



1 threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical,
2 social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

3 **SECTION 2.** Report. – The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of
4 Social Services, shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and
5 Human Services by December 1, 2021, that shall include, for each participating county, tracking
6 of case flow, completion and timing of the trauma checklist and screening tool, a comprehensive
7 clinical assessment, and diagnostic finding and service recommendations from the assessment.

8 **SECTION 3.** Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
9 Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, the sum of eighty
10 thousand dollars (\$80,000) for the 2019-2020 fiscal year and the sum of one hundred fifty
11 thousand dollars (\$150,000) for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to implement the standardized
12 assessment for youth in foster care pilot project created by this act.

13 **SECTION 4.** Effective Date. – This act becomes effective July 1, 2019.