

HJR 35: CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH CSCT OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

Impending funding changes have prompted a high level of public comment and legislative interest in a school-based mental health program known as Comprehensive School and Community Treatment (CSCT). This briefing paper provides an overview of the program.

CSCT BASICS

CSCT is a Medicaid-funded service that allows schools to offer outpatient mental health treatment and supportive services in the school or in the community. The services include individual, group, and family therapy, behavior and crisis interventions, and other services aimed at helping improve a child's functional level.

A child must be eligible for Medicaid and meet the criteria for Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED) to receive CSCT services. A Medicaid-eligible child who doesn't meet SED criteria may be referred to the program for limited services that can include an assessment, brief intervention, and referral.

Not all schools offer CSCT services. Schools that participate in the program must contract with a mental health center, which provides services using a licensed or in-training practitioner and a behavioral aide.

The Department of Public Health and Human Services created the CSCT program in 2005 by adopting administrative rules and policies. No state laws specifically authorize or govern the program.

HISTORIC AND FUTURE FUNDING

CSCT services accounted for nearly 23% of the spending on Medicaid-funded mental health services for children in Fiscal Year 2020, making up the largest category of Medicaid mental health spending.

Until recently, schools paid the state share of the program costs by providing an in-kind match. However, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) notified DPHHS in 2016 that the in-kind match did not meet federal standards and could not be continued. DPHHS negotiated with CMS to extend the use of in-kind matches until June 2020 and then used general fund dollars as match for the program after that.

The 2021 Legislature, through House Bill 671, directed DPHHS and the Office of Public Instruction to develop a new funding mechanism for CSCT services. However, lawmakers also appropriated \$2.2 million in general fund for CSCT in the current fiscal year. The so-called "bridge funding" was included in House Bill 2 to allow the program to continue while the two agencies work on and gain CMS approval for a new funding mechanism.

Sources

- "CSCT: Comprehensive School and Community Treatment." *Department of Public Health and Human Services*. June 14, 2018.
- "Children's Mental Health Bureau – Changes." *Department of Public Health and Human Services*. Excerpt from the DPHHS budget presentation to the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. January 2021.
- CSCT Memo from State Medicaid Director Marie Matthews to the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. Jan. 14, 2021.
- House Bill 2. Page E-3. 2021.