

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7016

By Hemmer

A RESOLUTION to urge TennCare and the Department of Education to coordinate and apply for federal grants and programs related to student mental health services and resources.

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education collaborated to release a comprehensive guide for filing Medicaid claims to enable school-based providers to receive payment for mental and physical health services eligible students receive at school; and

WHEREAS, this comprehensive guide outlines flexibilities states can adopt to expand and sustain critical school-based health services delivered to children enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) that will make it easier for schools to deliver and receive payment for health care, including mental healthcare services, to eligible students; and

WHEREAS, under the program, all states and school-based providers can take advantage of Medicaid payment to support eligible students with disabilities, with the option to go further and adopt policies that will allow them to bill Medicaid for school-based services for all Medicaid-enrolled students; and

WHEREAS, twenty-one states have adopted these policies to broadly allow Medicaid payment for covered services furnished to all eligible students in schools, and additional federal resources have been made available for school-based services through a new federal technical assistance center to support states as they consider additional steps to expand their Medicaid school-based health programs; and

WHEREAS, additional federal funding is available to build out a state's pipeline of mental health professionals serving in schools, with more than \$1 billion to help high-need school

districts hire and train school-based mental health professionals over the next five years; other federal funds, including Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) and State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), may also be used to support these efforts; and

WHEREAS, it has been recommended that states should extend the reach of these federal funds by fostering efforts among public health, K-12, and higher education leaders to expand pipeline programs preparing school-based mental health professionals, like school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers, and to consider additional state investments and supports in our school-based mental health workforce; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education has also invested funds in a new technical assistance center, Mental Health Personnel Technical Assistance Center, to support grantees and disseminate best practices, resources, and information related to preparation of school-based mental health services providers; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education also provides additional grant opportunities on a competitive basis that can be used by local communities to enhance public safety by supporting student health and well-being and community violence interventions, which includes the Full Service Community Schools program, the Project Prevent program, and the Promise Neighborhoods program; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced nearly \$245 million in Bipartisan Safer Community Act (BSCA) grant opportunities to support youth mental health, help the healthcare workforce address mental health needs, and fund other critical mental health supports; and

WHEREAS, this funding includes \$70 million to help develop and support school-based mental health programs; almost \$60 million to prepare and train school personnel, emergency first responders, law enforcement, and others to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental

health challenges, including those resulting from gun violence; nearly \$60 million to support primary care providers to treat the mental health needs of children and adolescents; and almost \$55 million to increase treatment and support services for individuals and communities affected by trauma, including trauma resulting from victimization by or exposure to gun violence; and

WHEREAS, in the coming months, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will also provide nearly \$60 million to states and territories for the second of four opportunities in supplemental funding for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant for mental health treatment and recovery services, including crisis services and early serious mental illness treatment programs; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby urge TennCare and the Department of Education to coordinate and apply for federal grants and programs related to student mental health services and resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared and transmitted to the director of TennCare and to the commissioner of the Department of Education.