

Chapter 321 of the Acts of 2008

AN ACT RELATIVE TO CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH.

Section 23. There shall be, within the department of mental health, a children's behavioral health research center, the primary mission of which shall be to ensure that the workforce of clinicians and direct care staff providing children's behavioral health services are highly skilled and well trained, the services provided to children in the commonwealth are cost-effective and evidence-based, and that the commonwealth continues to develop and evaluate new models of service delivery. Subject to appropriation, the center shall conduct activities as the commissioner may direct in furtherance of its primary mission, which may include: (i) collecting quarterly data from state agencies, the juvenile court, the commissioner of probation, service providers and insurance providers relative to children's behavioral health services; (ii) researching the best practices for the identification and treatment of children's behavioral health needs; (iii) evaluating the demand for and the availability, cost and quality of, children's behavioral health services provided by the commonwealth; (iv) publishing annual progress reports, including the estimated costs and benefits of implementing new programs or practices, the status of racial and ethnic disparities, and the capacity of the behavioral health system to meet clinically appropriate inpatient, residential and community-based service demands; and (v) providing information on a regular basis to the children's behavioral health advisory council, established by section 16Q of chapter 6A.

The center shall publish an annual report including: (i) narrative and statistical information about service demand, delivery and cost, and identified service gaps during the prior year; (ii) the effectiveness of the services delivered during the prior year; and (iii) review of research analyzed or conducted during the prior year. The center shall submit the annual report by February 1st to the governor, the children's behavioral health advisory council, the child advocate and the general court, by filing it with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the joint committee on mental health and substance abuse, the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities, the joint committee on health care financing and the senate and the house committees on ways and means.