



Mental Health Reforms included in the 21st Century Cures Act

Due to recent tragedies, there has been renewed interest in the subject of mental health and the federal government's related actions and policies. It is clear that Congress needs to continue examining and improving mental health care. In the coming weeks, the Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a hearing to review federal mental health policy and programs. But it is important to note that the mental health reforms included in the 21st Century Cures Act represented the most significant reforms to the mental health system in more than a decade.

From improving mental health care for children with serious emotional disturbance, to strengthening community crisis response systems, to developing school-based mental health crisis intervention teams including specialized training for school officials, to active shooter training programs for law enforcement, the 21st Century Cures Act made significant strides in this area and many of these programs are just now coming online. Below you will find summaries of the sections most relevant to current discussion around mental health:

Sec. 9002. Grants for Jail Diversion Programs

- Reauthorizes and makes technical updates to develop and implement programs to divert individuals with a mental illness from the criminal justice system to community-based services.
- Reauthorizes appropriations at the last appropriated level of \$4,269,000 for each of fiscal years 2018-2022.

Sec. 9007. Strengthening Community Crisis Response Systems

- Authorizes the Secretary to award grants to state and local governments, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations to strengthen community-based crisis response systems or to develop, maintain, or enhance a database of beds at inpatient psychiatric facilities, crisis stabilization units, and residential community mental health and residential substance use disorder treatment facilities.
- Authorizes the appropriation of \$12.5 million for the period of fiscal years 2018-2022.

Sec. 9013. National Violent Death Reporting System

- Encourages the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to improve, particularly through the inclusion of other states, the existing National Violent Death Reporting System.
- The reporting system was created in 2002 and currently collects surveillance data from 32 states

Sec. 10001. Programs for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances

- Reauthorizes and updates programs to provide comprehensive community mental health services to children with SED.
- Reauthorizes appropriations at the last appropriated level of \$119,026,000 for fiscal years 2018-2022.

Sec. 10004. Children's Recovery from Trauma

- Reauthorizes the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative (NCTSI), which supports a national network of child trauma centers, including university, hospital, and community-based centers and affiliate members.
- Supports the coordinating center's collection, analysis, and reporting of child outcome and other data to inform evidence-based treatments and services. Also supports the continuum of training initiatives related to such evidence-based treatments, interventions, and practices offered to providers.
- Encourages the collaboration between NCTSI and HHS to disseminate evidence-based and trauma-informed interventions, treatments, and other resources to appropriate stakeholders.
- Reauthorizes appropriations at the last appropriated level of \$46.9 million for each of fiscal years 2018-2022.

Sec. 14001. Law Enforcement Grants for Crisis Intervention Teams, Mental Health Purposes

- Amends the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program to allow law enforcement to use funds for the creation of mental health response and corrections programs, including police crisis intervention teams. Also allows state and local governments to use Byrne JAG funds in order to comply with current laws requiring the upload of certain mental health records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

- Amends the Community Oriented Policing Services Grant Program (COPS) to allow law enforcement to use funds for specialized mental health response training, including crisis de-escalation.
- Amends the Fire Prevention and Control Act to allow existing grant funds to be used for training first responders and paramedics on best practices for responding to mental health emergencies, including crisis de-escalation.

Sec. 14002. Assisted Outpatient Treatment Programs

- Allows federal mental health court grant funds to be used for the creation of court-ordered outpatient treatment programs to prevent the escalation of mental health crises.

Sec. 14004. Mental Health in the Judicial System

- Amends the America's Law Enforcement and Mental Health Project Act to allow state and local governments to use funds for the creation and deployment of behavioral health risk and needs assessments for mentally ill individuals in the criminal justice system.

Sec. 14005. Forensic Assertive Community Treatment Initiatives

- Amends the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction (MIOTCRA) to allow state and local governments to use existing authorized grant funds for the operation of Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Initiatives. FACT Initiatives provide high-intensity community-based services for individuals with mental illness who are involved in the criminal justice system.

Sec. 14010. School Mental Health Crisis Intervention Teams

- Amends the Department of Justice Secure Our Schools program to allow state and local governments to use existing grant funds to develop and operate school-based mental health crisis intervention teams that include coordination with law enforcement agencies and specialized training for school officials.

Sec. 14011. Active-shooter Training for Law Enforcement

- Permanently authorizes the existing Department of Justice VALOR Initiative, which provides crisis response training and active-shooter training for federal, state, and local law enforcement officials.

Sec. 14014. National Criminal Justice and Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance

- Amends MIOTCRA to allow the Attorney General to use existing authorized funds to award grants to non-profit organizations for the creation of a National Criminal Justice and Mental Health Training Center. This entity would coordinate best practices on responding to mental illness in the criminal justice system, and would provide technical assistance to governmental agencies who wish to implement these best practices.

Sec. 14015. Improving Department of Justice Data Collection on Mental Illness Involved in Crime

- Requires the Attorney General to collect and disseminate data regarding the involvement of mental illness in all homicides, as well as deaths or serious bodily injuries involving law enforcement officers.

Sec. 14024. Law Enforcement Training

- Authorizes resources for expanded training activities, providing more officers with a basic understanding of the issues involved when responding situations with individuals with mental health crises.

Sec. 14025. Federal Law Enforcement Training

- Requires the Attorney General to create programs that offer federal first responders and tactical units comprehensive training in procedures to identify and respond appropriately to incidents involving mentally ill individuals.

Additionally, the following reports required by Cures were recently released:

- [DHS and DOJ Are Working to Enhance Responses to Incidents Involving Individuals with Mental Illness](#)
- [Information on Inmates with Serious Mental Illness and Strategies to Reduce Recidivism](#)