

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025**

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SENATE BILL 838

Short Title: The Frontline Mental Health Support Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Theodros, Mayfield, and Bradley (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 28, 2026

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE FRONTLINE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM
TO PROVIDE CONFIDENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE FOR TEACHERS AND
FIRST RESPONDERS AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO EXPAND THE
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as "The Frontline Mental Health Support Act."

SECTION 2. The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services (DMH/DD/SUS), shall establish the Frontline Mental Health Support Program (the program) to provide confidential mental health services to eligible public servants who experience occupational stress and trauma in the course of their duties. The program shall provide access to licensed behavioral health professionals and shall prioritize trauma-informed care.

SECTION 3. The following individuals who are employed full-time in North Carolina shall be eligible to participate in the program:

- (1) Sworn law enforcement officers.
- (2) Firefighters.
- (3) Emergency medical technicians and paramedics.
- (4) Public safety telecommunicators, including 911 dispatchers.
- (5) Correctional officers employed by the Department of Adult Correction or local detention facilities.
- (6) Public school teachers.

SECTION 4. Participants in the program may receive up to 12 mental health counseling sessions per calendar year, conducted either in person or through telehealth, with an eligible licensed behavioral health professional, including all of the following:

- (1) Licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs).
- (2) Licensed clinical mental health counselors (LCMHCs).
- (3) Licensed psychologists.
- (4) Licensed psychiatrists.

SECTION 5. Participation in the program shall remain confidential. Any medical records created through participation in the program shall be strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed except as required by State or federal law. Participation in the program shall not be used as a basis to refuse to hire or promote, force to resign, fire, demote, sanction, discipline, materially alter the terms or conditions of employment, or retaliate or take other adverse employment action against the participating individual.



1 **SECTION 6.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
2 Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and
3 Substance Use Services (DMH/DD/SUS), the sum of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in
4 recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to establish and administer the
5 program.

6 **SECTION 7.** DMH/DD/SUS shall administer a grant program to behavioral health
7 providers to expand access to mental health services for eligible participants. Grant funds
8 provided under this section shall be used to expand the behavioral health workforce, including
9 for the hiring or contracting of LCSWs or LCMHCs, the provision of counseling services, the
10 expansion of trauma-informed care capacity, and the support of program administration. In
11 making grant award determinations under this section, DMH/DD/SUS shall give priority to grant
12 applications that propose the hiring or contracting of LCSWs and LCMHCs. These grant funds
13 may be awarded to any of the following:

- 14 (1) Nonprofit counseling centers.
- 15 (2) Behavioral health clinics.
- 16 (3) Hospital systems.
- 17 (4) Private mental health practices.

18 **SECTION 8.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
19 Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and
20 Substance Use Services (DMH/DD/SUS), the sum of three million dollars (\$3,000,000) in
21 recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to provide grants under Section
22 7 of this act.

23 **SECTION 9.** No later than October 1, 2028, DMH/DD/SUS shall submit a report to
24 the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Fiscal
25 Research Division on the implementation of the program. This report shall include all of the
26 following:

- 27 (1) Program participation rates.
- 28 (2) Workforce expansion outcomes.
- 29 (3) Utilization measures of mental health services.
- 30 (4) Recommendations for continuation or expansion of the program.

31 **SECTION 10.** This act is effective July 1, 2026.