

FIRST RESPONDER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENTS

2024 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Ryan D. Wilcox

Senate Sponsor: Don L. Ipson

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill concerns mental health services for first responders.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ creates and modifies definitions;
- ▶ requires the Department of Public Safety (department) to take certain actions regarding

critical incident stress management services for employees or volunteers of a first responder agency, including providing an annual training for volunteers;

- ▶ broadens the scope of individuals who are considered to be eligible for certain mental health resources;

clarifies that certain individuals remain eligible for mental health resources despite subsequent employment as a non-first responder;

- ▶ requires first responder agencies to:

- provide certain information concerning mental health resources to employed first responders; and

- designate a mental health resources liaison and inform the department of the identity of the liaison;

- ▶ allows the department to:

- assist a first responder agency in drafting a grant application seeking mental health resources; and

- provide certain mental health resources to certain first responder agencies;

- ▶ requires the department to:

- inform first responder agencies of certain mental health resources information;

- post on the department's website certain information concerning mental health

- 28 resources for first responders;
- 29 • receive complaints and investigate a denial of mental health resources to an
- 30 individual by a first responder agency; and
- 31 • report an uncured denial [~~of denial~~]of mental health resources to an eligible
- 32 individual to specified individuals;
- 33 ▸ requires the State Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (commission) to receive
- 34 and evaluate a referral from the department involving a denial of mental health resources to an
- 35 eligible individual;
- 36 ▸ allows the commission to, in the commission's discretion, refuse to award a grant of state
- 37 funds to an entity for a specified period of time due to the entity's improper denial of mental
- 38 health resources to an eligible individual; and
- 39 ▸ makes technical and conforming changes.

40 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

41 None

42 **Other Special Clauses:**

43 This bill provides a special effective date.

44 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

45 AMENDS:

46 **53-2d-206**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 19, 327 and renumbered

47 and amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 310 and last amended by Coordination Clause,

48 Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 307, 327

49 **53-21-101**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 16, 19, 310, and 328

50 **53-21-102**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 19

51 **53-21-103**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 19

52 **63M-7-204**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 158, 330, 382, and 500

53 **63M-7-218**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 158, 161 and 382

54 ENACTS:

55 **53-21-104.1**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

56 **53-21-104.3**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

57

58 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

59 Section 1. Section **53-2d-206** is amended to read:

60 **53-2d-206 . Personnel critical incident stress management program.**

61 (1) The bureau shall [~~develop and implement~~] facilitate a statewide program to provide

62 support and counseling for personnel who have been exposed to one or more stressful
63 incidents in the course of providing emergency services.

64 (2) ~~[This]~~ The critical incident stress management program shall include:

65 (a) ongoing training for agencies providing emergency services and counseling program
66 volunteers;

67 (b) critical incident stress debriefing for personnel at no cost to the emergency provider;
68 and

69 (c) advising the department on training requirements for licensure as a behavioral
70 emergency services technician.

71 (3) (a) The department shall annually provide informational resources to first responder
72 agencies about the critical incident stress management program in a format that will
73 ensure that the first responder agency receives the information.

74 (b) The informational resources described in Subsection (3)(a) shall include educational
75 resources about the critical incident stress management program directed to:

76 (i) the first responder agency administration; and

77 (ii) the employees or volunteers of the first responder agency.

78 ~~[(3)]~~ (4) (a) The department shall receive, process, and reimburse reasonable actual
79 expenses, including mileage, incurred by a volunteer during the course of ~~[the]~~ a
80 volunteer's provision of critical incident stress management services under this
81 section.

82 (b) The department shall, on the department's website, provide information concerning:

83 (i) the expenses that are eligible for reimbursement for a critical incident stress
84 management program volunteer under Subsection (4)(a); and

85 (ii) instructions on how a critical incident stress management volunteer may submit a
86 request for reimbursement under Subsection (4)(a).

87 (5) (a) The department shall, in collaboration with current critical incident stress
88 management program volunteers, organize and provide an annual training for critical
89 incident stress management program volunteers.

90 (b) For the training described in Subsection (5)(a), the department shall:

91 (i) pay for or reimburse reasonable actual expenses for a critical incident stress
92 management program volunteer who attends the training;

93 (ii) collaborate with existing critical incident stress management program volunteers
94 to determine a location for the training; and

95 (iii) provide information on the department's website about the training.

96 Section 2. Section **53-21-101** is amended to read:

97 **53-21-101 . Definitions.**

98 As used in this chapter:

- 99 (1) "Crime scene investigator technician" means an individual employed by a law
100 enforcement agency to collect and analyze evidence from crime scenes and
101 crime-related incidents.
- 102 [~~(2) "Department" means the Department of Public Safety.~~]
- 103 (2) "Designated mental health resources liaison" means a non-leadership human resources
104 or other administrative employee designated by a first responder agency who receives
105 and processes a request for mental health resources on behalf of the first responder
106 agency under this chapter.
- 107 (3) "First responder" means:
- 108 (a) a law enforcement officer, as defined in Section 53-13-103;
- 109 (b) an emergency medical technician, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
- 110 (c) an advanced emergency medical technician, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
- 111 (d) a paramedic, as defined in Section 53-2e-101;
- 112 (e) a firefighter, as defined in Section 34A-3-113;
- 113 (f) a dispatcher, as defined in Section 53-6-102;
- 114 (g) a correctional officer, as defined in Section 53-13-104;
- 115 (h) a special function officer, as defined in Section 53-13-105, employed by a local
116 sheriff;
- 117 (i) a search and rescue worker under the supervision of a local sheriff;
- 118 (j) a forensic interviewer or victim advocate employed by a children's justice center
119 established in accordance with Section 67-5b-102;
- 120 (k) a credentialed criminal justice system victim advocate as defined in Section
121 77-38-403 who responds to incidents with a law enforcement officer;
- 122 (l) a crime scene investigator technician;
- 123 (m) a wildland firefighter[-];[-or]
- 124 (n) an investigator or prosecutor of cases involving sexual crimes against children[-] ; or
- 125 (o) a civilian employee of a first responder agency who has been authorized to view or
126 otherwise access information concerning crimes, accidents, or other traumatic events.
- 127 (4) "First responder agency" means:
- 128 (a) a special district, municipality, interlocal entity, or other political subdivision that
129 employs a first responder to provide fire protection, paramedic, law enforcement, or

- 130 emergency services[-]; or
- 131 (b) a certified private law enforcement agency as defined in Section 53-19-102.
- 132 (5) (a) "Mental health resources" means:
- 133 [~~(a)~~] (i) an assessment to determine appropriate mental health treatment that is
- 134 performed by a mental health therapist;
- 135 [~~(b)~~] (ii) outpatient mental health treatment provided by a mental health therapist; or
- 136 [~~(c)~~] (iii) peer support services provided by a peer support specialist who is qualified
- 137 to provide peer support services under Subsection 26B-5-102(2)(h).
- 138 (b) "Mental health resources" includes, at a minimum, the following services:
- 139 (i) regular periodic screenings for all employees within the first responder agency;
- 140 (ii) assessments and availability to mental health services for personnel directly
- 141 involved in a critical incident within 48 hours of the incident; and
- 142 (iii) regular and continuing access to the mental health program for:
- 143 (A) spouses and children of first responders;
- 144 (B) first responders who have retired or separated from the agency; and
- 145 (C) spouses of first responders who have retired or separated from the agency.
- 146 (6) "Mental health therapist" means the same as that term is defined in Section 58-60-102.
- 147 (7) "Plan" means a plan to implement or expand a program that provides mental health
- 148 resources to first responders for which the division awards a grant under this chapter.
- 149 (8) "Retired" means the status of an individual who has become eligible, applies for, and
- 150 may receive an allowance under Title 49, Utah State Retirement and Insurance Benefit
- 151 Act.
- 152 (9) "Separated" means the status of an individual who has separated from employment as a
- 153 first responder from a first responder agency as a result of a critical incident involving
- 154 the first responder.
- 155 (10) "Small first responder agency" means a first responder agency that:
- 156 (a) has 10 or fewer employees;
- 157 (b) is primarily staffed by volunteers; or
- 158 (c) is located in:
- 159 (i) a county of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth class;
- 160 (ii) a city of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth class; or
- 161 (iii) a town.

Section 3. Section **53-21-102** is amended to read:

53-21-102 . Mental health services -- Requirement to provide -- Eligibility --

164 **Confidentiality -- Requests -- Reporting noncompliance -- Designation.**

- 165 (1) Every first responder agency within the state shall provide or make available mental
 166 health resources to:
- 167 (a) all first responders;
- 168 (b) the spouse and children of first responders;
- 169 (c) surviving spouses of first responders whose death is classified as a line-of-duty death
 170 under Title 49, Utah State Retirement and Insurance Benefit Act;
- 171 (d) retired or separated first responders for at least three years from the date that the
 172 retired or separated first responder requests mental health resources, regardless of any
 173 subsequent employment as a non-first responder; and
- 174 (e) spouses of retired or separated first responders for [~~a~~] at least three years from the
 175 date that the spouse of the retired or separated first responder requests mental health
 176 resources, regardless of any subsequent employment as a non-first responder.
- 177 (2) All access by first responders and their families to mental health resources shall be kept
 178 confidential.
- 179 (3) A first responder agency shall:
- 180 (a) annually provide information to all employed first responders regarding:
- 181 (i) the availability of mental health resources under this section, including:
- 182 (A) for individuals in addition to the first responders as described in Subsection (1);
 183 and
- 184 (B) subsequent to a separation or retirement;
- 185 (ii) how to access the mental health resources under this section; and
- 186 (iii) directions on how to appeal a denial of mental health resources under this section
 187 to the department, as provided under Section 53-21-104.3; and
- 188 (b) (i) assign a designated mental health resources liaison;
- 189 (ii) inform the department of the identity of the designated mental health resources
 190 liaison; and
- 191 (iii) update the department as to the identity of the designated mental health resources
 192 liaison when a new individual is assigned.

193 Section 4. Section **53-21-103** is amended to read:

194 **53-21-103 . Grants to first responder agencies -- Rulemaking.**

- 195 (1) The department may award grants to first responder agencies to provide mental health
 196 resources in response to a:
- 197 (a) request for proposal;

- 198 (b) request for qualifications; or
199 (c) program description that meets the criteria in Subsection (2).
- 200 (2) The request for proposal, request for qualifications, or program description received by
201 the department shall require mental health providers contracted or employed by the first
202 responder agency to have training and experience in working with first responders and
203 provide~~[, at a minimum, the following services:]~~ mental health resources.
204 ~~[(a) regular periodic screenings for all employees within the first responder agency;]~~
205 ~~[(b) assessments and availability to mental health services for personnel directly~~
206 ~~involved in a critical incident within 12 hours of the incident; and]~~
207 ~~[(c) regular and continuing access to the mental health program for:]~~
208 ~~[(i) spouses and children of first responders;]~~
209 ~~[(ii) first responders who have retired or separated from the agency; and]~~
210 ~~[(iii) spouses of first responders who have retired or separated from the agency.]~~
- 211 (3) An application from a first responder agency for a grant under this chapter shall provide
212 the following details:
213 (a) a proposed plan to provide mental health resources to first responders in the first
214 responder agency;
215 (b) the number of first responders to be served by the proposed plan;
216 (c) how the proposed plan will ensure timely and effective provision of mental health
217 resources to first responders in the first responder agency;
218 (d) the cost of the proposed plan; and
219 (e) the sustainability of the proposed plan.
- 220 (4) In evaluating a project proposal for a grant under this section, the department shall
221 consider:
222 (a) the extent to which the first responders that will be served by the proposed plan are
223 likely to benefit from the proposed plan;
224 (b) the cost of the proposed plan; and
225 (c) the viability of the proposed plan.
- 226 (5) A first responder agency may not apply for a grant to fund a program already in place.
227 However, a request for proposal to fund an expansion of an already existing program
228 shall, in addition to the requirements of Subsection (4), provide:
229 (a) the scope and cost of the agency's current program;
230 (b) the number of additional first responders the expansion will serve; and
231 (c) whether the expansion will provide ~~[services under Subsection (2)]~~ mental health

- 232 resources that the current program does not provide.
- 233 (6) The department shall prioritize grant funding for~~[:]~~ small first responder agencies, and
 234 may also take into account whether the small first responder agency is or will participate
 235 in the department-provided services described in Section 53-21-104.1.
 236 [~~(a) counties of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th class;~~]
 237 [~~(b) cities of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th class; and~~]
 238 [~~(c) towns.~~]
- 239 (7) The department may adopt rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah
 240 Administrative Rulemaking Act, to administer this chapter.
- 241 (8) The department shall:
- 242 (a) notify entities that may be eligible for a grant under this section about the grant
 243 program; and
- 244 (b) on or before October 1, ~~[2023]~~ 2024, and October 1, 2025, provide a report to the
 245 Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee that describes:
- 246 (i) the number of entities that have been notified by the department about the grant
 247 program under this section; and
- 248 (ii) the number of grant applications that the department has received.
- 249 (9) The department may assist a first responder agency in drafting a grant application under
 250 this section.
- 251 (10) The department may use up to 25% of the remaining grant funds under this section to
 252 provide the mental health resources described in Section 53-21-104.1.
- 253 Section 5. Section **53-21-104.1** is enacted to read:
- 254 **53-21-104.1 . Department may provide certain mental health resources --**
 255 **Requirements.**
- 256 (1) (a) In accordance with Subsection (4), the department may, at the department's
 257 discretion, provide certain mental health resources to a small first responder agency.
- 258 (b) The mental health resources described in Subsection (1)(a) may include an
 259 assessment and availability to mental health services for personnel directly involved
 260 in a critical incident within 48 hours of the incident.
- 261 (2) The department may use a contracted provider to provide the services described in
 262 Subsection (1).
- 263 (3) If a small first responder agency elects to receive mental health services as provided
 264 under this section, the small first responder agency shall designate a representative of the
 265 small first responder agency who is responsible for providing a timely notification to the

266 department or the department's designee if a critical incident occurs as described in
267 Subsection (1)(b).

268 (4) As provided in Subsection 53-21-103(10), the department may use up to 25% of the
269 remaining grant funds for the mental health resources described in this section, and may
270 discontinue the mental health resources once the available grant funding is depleted.

271 Section 6. Section **53-21-104.3** is enacted to read:

272 **53-21-104.3 . Education -- Complaints -- Investigations.**

273 (1) On or before September 1, 2024, the department shall inform all first responder
274 agencies in the state of the requirements described in Section 53-21-102.

275 (2) In addition to the notification required under Subsection (1), the department shall, on
276 the department's website, provide information describing:

277 (a) an individual's eligibility for mental health resources under Section 53-21-102;

278 (b) the statutory definition for mental health resources provided in Section 53-21-101;

279 (c) the designated mental health resources liaison for each first responder agency as
280 described in Subsection 53-21-102(3)(b); and

281 (d) how to appeal a denial of mental health resources to the department.

282 (3) (a) The department shall investigate a denial of mental health resources that is
283 received under Subsection (2)(d) to determine whether the denial was in violation of
284 this chapter.

285 (b) If, after an investigation, the department determines that a first responder agency
286 improperly denied mental health resources in violation of this chapter, the department
287 shall notify the first responder agency and provide 60 days for the first responder
288 agency to correct the improper denial.

289 (c) The department shall determine whether a first responder agency has cured the
290 violation within the time described in Subsection (3)(b) and, if the first responder
291 agency has not, the department shall send a letter within a reasonable time identifying
292 the first responder agency and the relevant details of the department's investigation to:

293 (i) the commissioner;

294 (ii) the chairs of the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee; and

295 (iii) the director of the State Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, who shall
296 refer the matter for investigation under Section 63M-7-204 and may restrict state
297 grant money under Section 63M-7-218.

298 Section 7. Section **63M-7-204** is amended to read:

299 **63M-7-204 . Duties of commission.**

- 300 (1) The State Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice administration shall:
- 301 (a) promote the commission's purposes as enumerated in Section 63M-7-201;
- 302 (b) promote the communication and coordination of all criminal and juvenile justice
303 agencies;
- 304 (c) study, evaluate, and report on the status of crime in the state and on the effectiveness
305 of criminal justice policies, procedures, and programs that are directed toward the
306 reduction of crime in the state;
- 307 (d) study, evaluate, and report on programs initiated by state and local agencies to
308 address reducing recidivism, including changes in penalties and sentencing
309 guidelines intended to reduce recidivism, costs savings associated with the reduction
310 in the number of inmates, and evaluation of expenses and resources needed to meet
311 goals regarding the use of treatment as an alternative to incarceration, as resources
312 allow;
- 313 (e) study, evaluate, and report on policies, procedures, and programs of other
314 jurisdictions which have effectively reduced crime;
- 315 (f) identify and promote the implementation of specific policies and programs the
316 commission determines will significantly reduce crime in Utah;
- 317 (g) provide analysis and recommendations on all criminal and juvenile justice
318 legislation, state budget, and facility requests, including program and fiscal impact on
319 all components of the criminal and juvenile justice system;
- 320 (h) provide analysis, accountability, recommendations, and supervision for state and
321 federal criminal justice grant money;
- 322 (i) provide public information on the criminal and juvenile justice system and give
323 technical assistance to agencies or local units of government on methods to promote
324 public awareness;
- 325 (j) promote research and program evaluation as an integral part of the criminal and
326 juvenile justice system;
- 327 (k) provide a comprehensive criminal justice plan annually;
- 328 (l) review agency forecasts regarding future demands on the criminal and juvenile
329 justice systems, including specific projections for secure bed space;
- 330 (m) promote the development of criminal and juvenile justice information systems that
331 are consistent with common standards for data storage and are capable of
332 appropriately sharing information with other criminal justice information systems by:
- 333 (i) developing and maintaining common data standards for use by all state criminal

- 334 justice agencies;
- 335 (ii) annually performing audits of criminal history record information maintained by
336 state criminal justice agencies to assess their accuracy, completeness, and
337 adherence to standards;
- 338 (iii) defining and developing state and local programs and projects associated with
339 the improvement of information management for law enforcement and the
340 administration of justice; and
- 341 (iv) establishing general policies concerning criminal and juvenile justice information
342 systems and making rules as necessary to carry out the duties under Subsection
343 (1)(k) and this Subsection (1)(m);
- 344 (n) allocate and administer grants, from money made available, for approved education
345 programs to help prevent the sexual exploitation of children;
- 346 (o) allocate and administer grants for law enforcement operations and programs related
347 to reducing illegal drug activity and related criminal activity;
- 348 (p) request, receive, and evaluate data and recommendations collected and reported by
349 agencies and contractors related to policies recommended by the commission
350 regarding recidivism reduction, including the data described in Section 13-53-111
351 and Subsection 26B-5-102(2)(l);
- 352 (q) establish and administer a performance incentive grant program that allocates funds
353 appropriated by the Legislature to programs and practices implemented by counties
354 that reduce recidivism and reduce the number of offenders per capita who are
355 incarcerated;
- 356 (r) oversee or designate an entity to oversee the implementation of juvenile justice
357 reforms;
- 358 (s) make rules and administer the juvenile holding room standards and juvenile jail
359 standards to align with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act
360 requirements pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Sec. 5633;
- 361 (t) allocate and administer grants, from money made available, for pilot qualifying
362 education programs;
- 363 (u) oversee the trauma-informed justice program described in Section 63M-7-209;
- 364 (v) request, receive, and evaluate the aggregate data collected from prosecutorial
365 agencies and the Administrative Office of the Courts, in accordance with Sections
366 63M-7-216 and 78A-2-109.5;
- 367 (w) report annually to the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee on

- 368 the progress made on each of the following goals of the Justice Reinvestment
 369 Initiative:
- 370 (i) ensuring oversight and accountability;
- 371 (ii) supporting local corrections systems;
- 372 (iii) improving and expanding reentry and treatment services; and
- 373 (iv) strengthening probation and parole supervision;
- 374 (x) compile a report of findings based on the data and recommendations provided under
 375 Section 13-53-111 and Subsection 26B-5-102(2)(n) that:
- 376 (i) separates the data provided under Section 13-53-111 by each residential,
 377 vocational and life skills program; and
- 378 (ii) separates the data provided under Subsection 26B-5-102(2)(n) by each mental
 379 health or substance use treatment program;
- 380 (y) publish the report described in Subsection (1)(x) on the commission's website and
 381 annually provide the report to the Judiciary Interim Committee, the Health and
 382 Human Services Interim Committee, the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
 383 Interim Committee, and the related appropriations subcommittees[-]; [~~and~~]
- 384 (z) receive, compile, and publish on the commission's website the data provided under:
- 385 (i) Section 53-23-101;
- 386 (ii) Section 53-24-102; and
- 387 (iii) Section 53-26-101; and
- 388 (aa) receive and evaluate a referral from the Department of Public Safety received under
 389 Section 53-21-104.3 involving a denial of mental health resources to an eligible
 390 individual, including, if appropriate in the commission's discretion, deny the relevant
 391 entity from receiving any grant of state funds under Section 63M-7-218 for a
 392 specified period of time.
- 393 (2) If the commission designates an entity under Subsection (1)(r), the commission shall
 394 ensure that the membership of the entity includes representation from the three branches
 395 of government and, as determined by the commission, representation from relevant
 396 stakeholder groups across all parts of the juvenile justice system, including county
 397 representation.
- 398 Section 8. Section **63M-7-218** is amended to read:
- 399 **63M-7-218 . State grant requirements.**
- 400 (1) Beginning July 1, 2023, the commission may not award any grant of state funds to any
 401 entity subject to, and not in compliance with, the reporting requirements in Subsections

402 63A-16-1002(5)(a) through (r).
403 (2) Beginning July 1, 2025, the commission may not award any grant of state funds to an
404 entity subject to the requirements under Sections 53-21-102 and 53-21-104.3, if the
405 commission has determined under Subsection 63M-7-204(1)(aa) that the entity is
406 currently not eligible to receive state grant funds under this section.

407 Section 9. **Effective date.**

408 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2024.