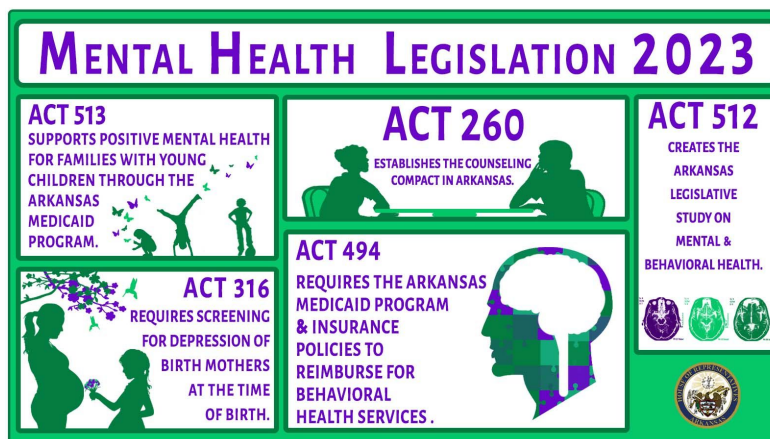




Arkansas House Newsletter

May 16, 2024

Mental Health Awareness Month



May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of mental health and wellness in Americans' lives and celebrating recovery from mental illness.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 23% of Arkansans reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorders from March to April of this year, which is 2 percentage points higher than the national average.

The Arkansas General Assembly has been proactive in addressing mental health needs in the state. Earlier this year, the Arkansas Legislative Council allocated \$30 million from the American Rescue Plan funds, following a request from the Department of Human Services, to enhance mental health and substance abuse services statewide.

During the 2023 Regular Session, the General Assembly passed Act 513, which directs the Arkansas Medicaid Program to provide a supplemental reimbursement rate for physician practices enrolled in the patient-centered medical home program participating in a team-based, evidence-based pediatric practice

transformation model of care.

Additional legislation passed to address mental healthcare includes:

- Act 260: Creates the Counseling Compact in Arkansas, allowing licensed professional counselors in the state to treat clients in person or via telehealth in other compact member states. Currently, 17 states are members.
- Act 494: Requires the Arkansas Medicaid Program and insurance policies to reimburse for behavioral health services.
- Act 316: Mandates screening for depression in birth mothers at the time of birth and requires insurance policies to cover the screening.
- Act 30: Permits individuals who voluntarily seek mental health treatment in an institution or facility to petition the court for a license to carry a concealed handgun two years after treatment.
- Act 61: Establishes a specialty court program for families involved in dependency-neglect proceedings affected by substance abuse or mental health disorders.
- Act 512: Creates the Arkansas Legislative Study on Mental and Behavioral Health to continue reviewing the state's needs and make recommendations for future legislative sessions.

We remind Arkansans that if you or someone you know is in emotional distress or experiencing a suicidal crisis, you can call 988. By calling, texting, or chatting 988, you will be connected to trained counselors who are part of the existing lifeline network.