

House Bill 332

By: Representatives Herring of the 145th, Frye of the 122nd, Bell of the 75th, Gilliard of the 162nd, Flournoy of the 74th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 7C of Chapter 4 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to therapy services for children with disabilities, so as to convene an advisory
3 working group to review tools and protocols for the screening of children for trauma within
4 the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program; to provide for findings
5 and recommendations; to provide for abolishment of the advisory working group; to provide
6 for subsequent periodic review of screening protocols and tools; to provide for
7 implementation only if certain conditions are met; to provide for related matters; to repeal
8 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 Article 7C of Chapter 4 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
12 therapy services for children with disabilities, is amended by adding a new Code section to
13 read as follows:

14 "49-4-169.4.

15 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'trauma' means the result of an event, series of
16 events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or

17 emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's
18 functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

19 (b)(1) The department, in consultation with the Department of Behavioral Health and
20 Developmental Disabilities, community service boards, managed care plan experts,
21 behavioral health experts, child welfare experts, and stakeholders, shall convene an
22 advisory working group to update, amend, or develop, if appropriate, tools and protocols
23 for the screening of children for trauma, within the EPSDT Program. The advisory
24 working group shall review and make recommendations regarding:

25 (A) Existing screening tools used in the EPSDT Program, including, but not limited to,
26 the United States Preventive Services Task Force grade 'A' or 'B' recommendations, and
27 the periodicity schedule and anticipatory guidance issued by the Bright Futures
28 initiative led by the American Academy of Pediatrics; and

29 (B) The efficacy and appropriateness of the types of providers authorized to administer
30 screenings.

31 (2) The department shall convene the advisory working group by October 1, 2025. The
32 advisory working group shall report its findings and recommendations, as well as the
33 amount of funding that would be necessary to implement such recommendations, to the
34 department and to the General Assembly's appropriation committees and committees on
35 Health and Human Services no later than October 1, 2026. The advisory working group
36 shall be abolished on December 31, 2026.

37 (3) Findings or recommendations of the advisory working group that cannot be
38 implemented without a subsequent appropriation by the General Assembly, as determined
39 by the department, shall not be implemented until such appropriation is made.

40 (4) On and after October 1, 2026, the department shall periodically review and consider
41 the protocols for the screening of trauma in children consistent with subparagraphs
42 (b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B) of this Code section. The advisory working group created
43 pursuant to this subsection may, prior to its abolishment, recommend to the department

44 an existing group appropriate to conduct such periodic review. The department shall
45 ensure that the protocols for the screening of trauma in children are reviewed and
46 considered at least once every five years.

47 (c) This Code section shall be implemented only if and to the extent that federal financial
48 participation under Title XIX of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Section 1396,
49 et seq.) is not jeopardized and all necessary federal approvals have been obtained."

50

SECTION 2.

51 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.