

As Introduced

133rd General Assembly

Regular Session

2019-2020

H. B. No. 646

Representative Howse

A BILL

To require the Director of Health to establish and
operate a pilot program to provide individual,
problem-solving therapy sessions and related
family support services to youth and young
adults in Cleveland who are at a high risk for
gun violence.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. As used in this act:

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(A) "Certified community health worker" has the same
meaning as in section 4723.01 of the Revised Code.

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(B) "Federally qualified health center" and "federally
qualified health center look-alike" have the same meanings as in
section 3701.047 of the Revised Code.

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Section 2. (A) The Director of Health shall establish and
operate a pilot program that is based on the Friendship Bench
Program, a mental health intervention program in Mbare, Harare,
Zimbabwe. Under the program, specially trained certified
community health workers shall provide individual, problem-
solving therapy sessions to youth and young adults residing in
Cleveland, Ohio, who are at a high risk for gun violence. The

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certified community health workers also shall provide support 20
services to families of the youth and young adults who 21
participate in the therapy sessions. 22

The provision of therapy sessions to patients, and support 23
services to their families, shall begin not later than October 24
1, 2021, and conclude on September 30, 2023. The sessions and 25
support services shall be provided in pediatrician practices, 26
primary care practices and clinics, federally qualified health 27
centers, and federally qualified health center look-alikes that 28
are selected by the Director of Health in accordance with 29
division (B) of this section. The Director shall determine the 30
maximum number of therapy sessions in which a patient may 31
participate. 32

(B) Not later than June 1, 2021, the Director shall 33
identify and invite pediatrician practices, primary care 34
practices and clinics, federally qualified health centers, and 35
federally qualified health center look-alikes to participate in 36
the pilot program. After consultation with the Cleveland 37
Division of Police, the Director shall invite to participate in 38
the pilot program those practices, clinics, and centers that 39
serve a significant percentage of youth and young adults who 40
reside in Cleveland neighborhoods with the highest risk of gun 41
violence and have space to accommodate the therapy sessions for 42
patients and support services for families. From those that 43
accept the invitation, the Director shall select the practices, 44
clinics, and centers to participate based on their willingness 45
to comply with the rules adopted under division (E) of this 46
section. 47

(C) The Director shall recruit certified community health 48
workers to participate in the pilot program. If the Director 49

requests, the Board of Nursing shall assist the Director in 50
identifying and contacting certified community health worker 51
training programs that could assist with the recruitment effort. 52

(D) The Director shall develop a Friendship Bench 53
curriculum that staff of the Department of Health and Cleveland 54
Department of Public Health shall use to train certified 55
community health workers who are recruited to participate in the 56
pilot program under division (C) of this section. In developing 57
the curriculum, the Director shall use the resources and tools 58
from the web site of the Friendship Bench Program, 59
www.friendshipbenchzimbabwe.org, and also may consult with the 60
Program's operators as well as other individuals or entities 61
that are familiar with the Program. 62

(E) The Director shall adopt rules under section 111.15 of 63
the Revised Code to implement the program. 64

(F) Not later than December 31, 2023, the Director shall 65
submit a written report to the Governor and General Assembly 66
that summarizes the data that has been collected on the pilot 67
program during its operation; evaluates the pilot program's 68
success in reducing gun violence among the youth, young adults, 69
and families served by the program; makes recommendations 70
regarding continuation or expansion of the program; and provides 71
any other information the Director considers appropriate for 72
inclusion in the report. The Director shall submit the report to 73
the General Assembly in accordance with section 101.68 of the 74
Revised Code. 75