



SC Legislative News

February 26 – February 29, 2024

This update is prepared and distributed by the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) to keep you informed of state legislative updates that may affect the Agency, mental health, healthcare, budget information, and other issues of interest. This publication is also available to employees on the SCDMH intranet site. Contact Robin Crawford, SCDMH Director of Governmental Affairs, for more information at robin.crawford@scdmh.org.

On Tuesday, the Senate debated [S.915](#) on the floor. S.915 is the legislation that restructures the state’s healthcare agencies, creating the Executive Office of Health and Policy and a new Secretary position to lead that office. The Bill, in its current form, combines SCDMH and the SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) into a new department, named the “Department of Behavioral Health”. The Senate approved multiple amendments to the Bill, including one that requires the state to develop an Olmstead plan. The Plan will be developed based on a Supreme Court ruling that requires states to place qualified individuals in the most integrated settings – usually home and community settings, rather than institutions. On Wednesday, the bill was given third reading, and it will be sent to the House for consideration.

The House was on furlough this week, but its Ways and Means Committee met to work on the FY25 state budget. On Tuesday, Ways and Means considered provisos and on Wednesday it met and passed the first version of the state’s FY25 budget. The SCDMH budget includes \$5 million for capital projects for Stone Veterans Nursing Home and \$2 million for the SCDMH Central Office relocation from Bull Street to the former SCANA campus in Cayce. The Committee passed the budget, which will be considered and debated on the House floor the week of March 11th. The FY25 budget passed by the Committee this week is only its first version and will continue to undergo multiple changes through May, until the House and Senate agree on a final version before sending it to the Governor’s office for consideration later this year.

On Wednesday, a Senate Medical Affairs subcommittee met for a third time to consider [H.4624](#), a ban on gender-affirming care. The subcommittee met previously to take testimony from the public and a second time to discuss concerns with the Bill, including student safety. This week, the subcommittee gave the Bill a favorable report. It will be sent to the full Senate Medical Affairs Committee for consideration.

SCDMH’s Senate Finance budget presentation has been rescheduled and will now take place on March 5th. Wednesday, March 6th, will be Mental Health Advocacy Day at the SC State House from 9am to 12pm. Remarks will begin at 10am on the south side State House steps. Join us as we connect with legislators and community champions to advocate for mental health and suicide prevention!

Visit the SC State House [website](#) to read any legislation of interest, [find out who represents you in the SC House and SC Senate](#), or to contact your legislators.