

News You Can Use

Your monthly resource for news and information about behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disabilities in western North Carolina and beyond

State task force: Programs, services needed to help those with mental illness, addiction

[State task force recommendations](#) to improve the lives of North Carolinians with mental illness or drug or alcohol issues received a warm welcome in May as N.C. Health and Human Services Secretary Rick Brajer presented the committee's report to Gov. Pat McCrory at a ceremony in Fayetteville.

The Governor's Task Force on Mental Health and Substance Use was charged with finding ways to reduce stigma and encourage individuals to seek treatment before ending up in crisis, the emergency department or jail. Smoky CEO Brian Ingraham served on the task force and co-chaired the Subcommittee on Prescription Opioid Abuse, Heroin Resurgence and Special Topics.

McCrory included \$30 million in his proposed budget to implement several recommendations, including expanded transitional housing, case management, Mental Health First Aid training, child crisis centers, measures to combat the opioid epidemic and specialty drug treatment and veterans courts. The budget also distributes \$20 million for one-time funding opportunities to address additional recommendations.

More specifically, the task force called for expanding opioid addiction treatment capacity, increasing access to the overdose-reversal drug naloxone and treatment medications such as buprenorphine and encouraging the creation of local task forces on mental health and substance use issues.

"These recommendations will help us build on our progress to divert mental health patients and those fighting addiction from emergency rooms and county jails into much needed treatment," McCrory said. [Read the full committee report online.](#)



Courtesy the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services