

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House of Representatives
FROM: Representative Rosemary Brown
DATE: March 11, 2013
RE: Proposed Legislation: Mental Health Screening Examinations for Children of School Age

I am preparing to introduce legislation that will require annual mental health screenings for children of school age.

Current law requires that all children of school age in this Commonwealth be administered medical screening examinations, including vision tests, hearing tests, height and weight measurements, tuberculosis tests and dental examinations. The results of these medical screening examinations must be included in the comprehensive health record that the school must maintain for each child. However, there is no requirement that children of school age receive mental health screenings. Mental health screenings can help identify troubled children and increase the likelihood that such children will receive appropriate services.

My proposal will require the Department of Education (PDE) and the Department of Health (DOH), in consultation with statewide organizations representing physicians, psychologists, social workers and school counselors, to develop age-appropriate mental health screening examinations. The screening examinations developed by PDE and DOH will be administered annually to each child of school age by the school physician or by the child's family physician. The results of the screening examinations must be reported to the child's parent or guardian, reported to the child's school, and included in the child's comprehensive health record maintained by the school. My bill also calls for the State Board of Education to develop any guidelines or standards necessary to implement the new provisions.

Thank you for your consideration.