

Task Force to Create a Healing-Centered Illinois

SB 646

Traumatic experiences are common and, when left unaddressed, can have serious consequences for health and well-being throughout life and **for the safety and vibrancy of communities**. SB 646 would create a Task Force for a Healing-Centered Illinois to design a state level comprehensive and equitable strategy for addressing trauma.

Some of Illinois' biggest challenges are rooted in trauma.

Research over decades shows that people who experience trauma and do not receive healing support are at higher risk for cancer, diabetes, dementia, and other chronic health conditions. **Trauma increases the risk for both the perpetration and further victimization of violence** and makes it more likely someone will misuse drugs and alcohol, suffer from depression, and attempt suicide. Traumatic experiences that go unaddressed can also lead to poorer outcomes at school and at work and can make interactions with the legal criminal system more likely.

- In Illinois, **60% of adults report experiencing at least one potentially traumatic experience in childhood** with 16% experiencing four or more. As the number of adverse experiences an individual reports goes up, so does their risk for negative health and social outcomes.
- A study of the impact of two potentially traumatic experiences on high school students in Chicago found that **students who reported having both experiences were at over 6 times greater risk for violence and victimization**, and 4.5 times greater risk for mental health problems than students with neither experience.
- Studies have shown that **nearly the entire population of incarcerated adults experienced trauma** at some point in their lifetime, while 90% of youth involved with juvenile justice have been exposed to at least one traumatic event.



Illinois needs a coordinated, strategic approach to addressing trauma and promoting healing.

The Task Force for a Healing-Centered Illinois Act would develop recommendations to coordinate trauma reduction efforts, to collect information needed to design programs and measure their effectiveness, and to identify the need for resources to prevent and treat trauma in Illinois.

The Task Force will be led by Lieutenant Governor Stratton and housed within the Lieutenant Governor's office. Members will represent the diversity of the state and childhood and adulthood perspectives. It will be composed of elected officials, state agency representatives, and subject matter experts, including people who have experienced trauma. The Task Force will dissolve after presenting its recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Illinois is ready.

The Task Force for a Healing-Centered Illinois will build upon the policy foundation established by prior initiatives designed to promote **statewide, broad-based trauma-informed and healing-centered transformation for Illinoisans of every age.**

- The **Whole Child Task Force (WCTF)**, established as part of the education reform package developed and championed by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus. In March 2022, the WCTF released a **comprehensive set of recommendations** focused primarily on trauma-informed, healing-centered policies and practices impacting schools and children.
- The **Children's Mental Health Transformation Initiative**, launched by Governor Pritzker in March 2022, **released a blueprint** outlining strategies for improving the state's response to young people experiencing mental health challenges.
- **Illinois Children's Mental Health Plan**, released by the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership in 2022, outlines a comprehensive five year plan for improving children's mental health and wellness.

Endorsing Organizations

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, Center for Childhood Resilience, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, Illinois ACEs Response Collaborative, Illinois Aging Together, Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition, Illinois Justice Project, West40

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