

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001**

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SENATE BILL 542

Short Title: Database on Psychotropic Meds/Children. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Foxx; Allran, Ballantine, Berger, Bingham, Carpenter, Carrington, Forrester, Garwood, Hartsell, Kerr, Kinnaird, Metcalf, Moore, Odom, and Rucho.

Referred to: Children & Human Resources.

March 19, 2001

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

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2 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
3 SERVICES TO REVIEW THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A
4 STATEWIDE DATABASE ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF PSYCHOTROPIC
5 MEDICATIONS TO CHILDREN WHO RECEIVE STATE SERVICES.

6 Whereas, during the past decade the number of American children receiving
7 medication for behavioral and emotional disorders has increased dramatically; and

8 Whereas, there is a growing trend for children to receive medications for
9 depression and other behavioral and health conditions; and

10 Whereas, a report in the Journal of the American Medical Association
11 indicates that the rate of prescribing psychotropic medications for preschool children
12 rose threefold between 1991 and 1995; and

13 Whereas, opponents of the use of psychotropic drugs are concerned about
14 overuse of the drugs, and also that there is not enough information about these drugs'
15 effect on children's development or on their long-term side effects; and

16 Whereas, proponents argue that the use of psychotropic medications may be
17 needed to combat mental illness, but agree that children should not be medicated unless
18 a qualified clinician decides that such a course is in the child's best interest and the
19 medication is used in conjunction with other types of treatment; Now, therefore,
20 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

21 **SECTION 1.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall review
22 the feasibility of establishing and maintaining a statewide database containing
23 information on the prescription and administration of psychotropic medications to
24 children who receive State services. Not later than January 1, 2002, the Department
25 shall report its findings and recommendations to the Joint Legislative Health Care
26 Oversight Committee and to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Mental

1 Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services. The report shall
2 include the cost of establishing and maintaining the database in a manner that provides
3 data for the analysis of prescription medication usage by and effects on children, and
4 that affords protection of medical records in accordance with State and federal law.

5 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.