



State of Utah

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Date: 6/26/2024

Re: Office of Substance Use and Mental Health recommendation

Chief Matt Pennington,

As required by HB84 (2024 G.S) line 787-789, the Office of Substance Use and Mental Health following national research and consultation with state experts Dr. Ashley Greenwell Psy.D., Dr. Brian Partridge Psy.D., and Dr. John Livingston Ph.D. makes the following two-part recommendation:

1. Guardian selection process:

"New Guardians must pass a "fit to carry assessment" prior to commencing their duties."

2. Guardian annual recertification:

"Existing Guardians must participate in at least one mental health screening per calendar year as part of the annual recertification requirements."

In consideration of the above recommendation, the Office of Substance Use and Mental Health requests the following additional steps be taken:

- An official definition of the term "fit to carry assessment" be included in state statute and/or Utah State Board of Education board rule. Our recommendation for this is as follows:
"A series of psychological assessments administered by a professional with Level C qualifications to include: a personality assessment, a symptoms screener, an in-person interview, and a reference check of at least one personal reference provided by the Guardian."
- The Education Advisory Board be assigned the task of conducting a feasibility study for including mental health screening as part of the Guardian's annual recertification requirements, and make recommendations to the School Safety Task Force.

Director, Office of Substance Use and Mental Health