

# Assembly approves mental health pilot program, among other bills

Posted on Tuesday, Jan 21, 2020

Assembly lawmakers today passed a bill that would establish a mental health pilot program for schools in Outagamie County.

Dems criticized AB 644, saying a pilot program doesn't go far enough to cover youth mental health concerns in the state. They introduced a bill that would've expanded the program statewide but it failed along party lines.

"It does not matter where you live there is a shortage," said Rep. Chris Taylor, D-Madison. "This is crumbs. And I will vote for the crumbs."

But the bill's author Rep. Jim Steineke, R-Kaukauna said it would be "incredibly irresponsible" to initially roll out the program statewide.

**>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

"Sometimes you have to take those first steps before you can run," Steieneke said. "I hope we can push this out fast. But you have to start somewhere to develop the framework of the program."

The bill passed 98-0.

Other bills that passed the Assembly include:

\*AB 439: Would eliminate a six-month waiting period on remarriage after a divorce. Passed by voice vote.

\*AB 645: Would allow jailors to administer opioid antagonists on overdosing prisoners. Passed by voice vote.

\*AB 648: Would permit coverage of acupuncture and expand physical therapy Medicaid coverage by \$1million over two years. Passed 97-1, with Rep. David Crowley, D-Milwaukee, opposed.