
HOUSE BILL 2513

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Representatives Orwall, Holy, Kilduff, Pellicciotti, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Stambaugh, Gregerson, Reeves, Muri, McBride, Wylie, Peterson, Stanford, Pollet, Doglio, and Johnson

Read first time 01/10/18. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to implementing a comprehensive approach to
2 suicide prevention and behavioral health in higher education, with
3 enhanced services to student veterans; adding new sections to chapter
4 43.70 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.77 RCW; creating a new
5 section; and providing an expiration date.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) Washington has been a leader in
8 addressing suicide as a public health issue. The legislature intends
9 for Washington to continue its leadership by supporting the creation
10 of comprehensive suicide prevention and behavioral health initiatives
11 for postsecondary students. In 2015, the legislature created the
12 mental health and suicide prevention in higher education task force.
13 The task force was charged with determining the policies, resources,
14 and technical assistance needed to support postsecondary institutions
15 in improving access to behavioral health services and improving
16 suicide prevention responses. In November 2016, the task force issued
17 its report on mental health and suicide prevention in higher
18 education.

19 (2) According to the task force report:

20 (a) The 2005 American college health assessment survey found that
21 nine and one-half percent of students seriously considered suicide,

1 one and one-half percent of students nationwide have attempted
2 suicide, and less than twenty percent were in treatment. According to
3 the 2015 American college health association national college health
4 assessment, seventy-five percent of postsecondary students reported
5 feeling overwhelmed and thirty percent reported feeling so depressed
6 it was difficult to function. More than one-third of students
7 reported anxiety as negatively impacting academics and almost one-
8 quarter said depression negatively impacted academics;

9 (b) There is incomplete data on suicide deaths among Washington's
10 postsecondary students and the availability of behavioral health
11 resources on Washington's campuses. There is currently no statewide
12 system in place to track this data;

13 (c) Lack of funding for behavioral health resources across all
14 sectors is the largest barrier to providing services for
15 postsecondary students statewide;

16 (d) Due to funding constraints, the level of professional mental
17 and behavioral health counseling is often limited for postsecondary
18 institutions in all sectors. For example, six institutions in the
19 public two-year sector servicing nearly fifty thousand students have
20 either no professional mental health providers to counsel students or
21 have such limited resources that the counselor to student ratio was
22 as low as one to nearly eight thousand five hundred in 2014-2015.

23 (3) The legislature also recognizes that, as of 2016, there were
24 over sixteen thousand student veterans and dependents enrolled in
25 Washington's community and technical colleges, and approximately four
26 thousand veterans and dependents enrolled in Washington's four-year
27 institutions of higher education. The legislature recognizes that the
28 risk for suicide is significantly higher among veterans when compared
29 to nonveteran adults in the United States and that student veterans
30 face unique challenges and often have vastly different life
31 experiences from traditional students. According to a study presented
32 a few years ago at an annual convention of the American psychological
33 association, almost half of military veterans who are enrolled in
34 college have contemplated suicide at some point and twenty percent
35 have planned to kill themselves.

36 (4) The legislature intends to implement task force
37 recommendations by:

38 (a) Creating a publicly available statewide resource for
39 postsecondary institutions;

40 (b) Developing and centralizing data collection; and

1 (c) Creating a grant program for resource-challenged institutions
2 to help develop suicide prevention programs in those institutions,
3 which may include for example, enhancing treatment services to
4 student veterans; creating campus-wide crisis services; expanding
5 existing crisis plans to integrate suicide intervention; reentry,
6 including medical leave that supports reentry; postvention; and
7 creating links and referral systems between campus behavioral health
8 resources and community-based mental health resources.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70
10 RCW to read as follows:

11 (1) Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this
12 specific purpose, the department, in collaboration with the student
13 achievement council, shall develop a statewide resource for
14 behavioral health and suicide prevention for the state's
15 postsecondary institutions.

16 (2) To establish the components of the statewide resource, the
17 department shall convene and consult with a work group that consists
18 of representatives from stakeholder groups the department deems
19 appropriate. The department must consider representatives from the
20 entities listed in the mental health and suicide prevention in higher
21 education task force, created by chapter 67, Laws of 2015. At a
22 minimum, the entities or persons in the work group must include:

- 23 (a) Representation from a tribal college;
- 24 (b) Representation from a veterans training support center;
- 25 (c) Representation from students and families;
- 26 (d) Representatives selected by the educational opportunity gap
27 oversight and accountability committee;
- 28 (e) Representation from a community behavioral health provider;
- 29 (f) A suicide prevention expert; and
- 30 (g) Three institutional counseling center directors or executive
31 directors to include one from each of the following: A public four-
32 year college or university, a private, nonprofit institution, and a
33 community and technical college.

34 (3) To develop the statewide resource, the department shall
35 contract with an entity that has suicide prevention expertise. The
36 department must consider recommendations made by the work group
37 regarding choice of the contracting entity. The contracting entity
38 must be responsible for constructing and hosting the statewide

1 resource and linking the resource to the student achievement
2 council's and the department's web sites.

3 (4) At a minimum, the statewide resource must:

4 (a) Be made publicly available through a web-based portal or a
5 support line;

6 (b) Provide a free curriculum to train faculty, staff, and
7 students in suicide recognition and referral skills and in the
8 specific needs of student veterans;

9 (c) Provide a resource to build capacity within the institutions
10 to train individuals to deliver training in person;

11 (d) Contain model crisis protocols, per sector, that include
12 behavioral health and suicide identification, intervention, reentry,
13 and postvention;

14 (e) Contain model marketing materials and messages that promote
15 student behavioral health on college campuses;

16 (f) Develop capacity for an annual conference for postsecondary
17 institutions seeking to address students' behavioral health and
18 suicide prevention needs. The contracting entity must be responsible
19 for hosting the first conference for postsecondary institutions; and

20 (g) Include resources that will serve diverse communities and
21 underrepresented populations, including resources that are culturally
22 relevant.

23 (5) The statewide resource must be made available to
24 postsecondary institutions by June 30, 2020.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.77
26 RCW to read as follows:

27 (1) Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this
28 specific purpose, the suicide prevention in higher education grant
29 program is established. The purpose of the grant program is to
30 provide funding to postsecondary institutions for the institutions to
31 create partnerships with health care entities to provide mental
32 health, behavioral health, and suicide prevention to students in
33 their institutions.

34 (2)(a) The council shall administer the grant program in
35 accordance with this section and in collaboration with the work group
36 convened by the department of health under section 2 of this act. The
37 council shall establish minimum criteria that grant recipients must
38 meet to be awarded a grant. The grant program must be implemented by
39 November 1, 2019.

1 (b) The council must award the first six grants created under
2 this section to public community and technical colleges. When
3 selecting the public community and technical colleges to be awarded
4 the first six grants under this subsection, the council must consult
5 with the state board for community and technical colleges. The
6 council must identify which colleges have the greatest need along
7 with a clear and strong demonstration of leadership willingness to
8 utilize the statewide resources created under section 2 of this act
9 and to develop partnerships to enhance capacity. From those
10 identified colleges, proposals that enhance treatment services to
11 student veterans must be given priority. Once the first six grants
12 are awarded, the council may award grants to other postsecondary
13 institutions that meet the council's criteria.

14 (3) For the purposes of this section, "postsecondary
15 institutions" means institutions of higher education as defined in
16 RCW 28B.10.016, degree-granting institutions as defined in RCW
17 28B.85.010, private vocational schools as defined under RCW
18 28C.10.020, and school as defined in RCW 18.16.020.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70
20 RCW to read as follows:

21 (1) Beginning June 1, 2019, and every June 1st thereafter until
22 2022, postsecondary institutions shall submit a report to the state
23 department of health for the purposes of establishing a baseline for
24 behavioral health concerns and responses at the institutions of
25 higher education.

26 (2) The annual report must include the following information as
27 reported to the postsecondary institution, in compliance with the
28 department of health's established data collection requirements, and
29 if an institution does not collect or have access to the information
30 it must indicate this in the report:

31 (a) The awareness of students, faculty, and staff regarding
32 behavioral health and suicide prevention resources;

33 (b) The institution's counselor-to-student ratio;

34 (c) The number of students referred to off-campus behavioral
35 health providers;

36 (d) The number of students identifying emotional distress as
37 reasons for withdrawal;

38 (e) The number of student suicide deaths;

1 (f) The number of student suicide attempts that result in
2 hospitalization;

3 (g) Information about dissemination of material to students about
4 behavioral health resources that are available on and off campus;

5 (h) Confirmation of campus plans for suicide recognition and
6 referral training that identifies groups receiving the required
7 training and which groups are recommended to receive training in the
8 future;

9 (i) The entity or entities on campus responsible for the
10 development and maintenance of the campus crisis plan that integrate
11 policies for suicide identification, intervention, reentry, and
12 postvention;

13 (j) The campus point person or persons responsible for the crisis
14 plan; and

15 (k) Information about behavioral health services and supports
16 available to veterans on campus.

17 (3) For purposes of this section, "postsecondary institutions"
18 has the same meaning as that term is defined in section 3 of this
19 act.

20 (4) This section expires December 31, 2022.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70
22 RCW to read as follows:

23 (1) By December 31, 2018, for the purposes of collecting data on
24 suicide prevention and behavioral health in higher education, the
25 department shall identify data, methods for data collection, and data
26 definitions to be used by postsecondary institutions required to
27 submit annual reports under section 4 of this act. The department
28 shall collaborate with the postsecondary institutions, as defined in
29 section 3 of this act, in establishing data collection requirements
30 and criteria.

31 (2) The department shall aggregate the information it receives by
32 sector and, by December 1st of each year, the department must submit
33 an aggregated summary report to the relevant committees of the
34 legislature. The department shall serve as the depository for annual
35 reports submitted by institutions of higher education under section 4
36 of this act.

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