AN ACT Relating to improving the behavioral health of people in the agricultural industry; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature finds that the agricultural industry is an integral part of Washington's economy and sense of common identity, and that the behavioral health of workers in the industry and their family members is a statewide concern.

(2) Several factors related to the agricultural industry may affect the behavioral health of workers in the agricultural industry, including job-related isolation and demands, stressful work environments, the heightened potential for financial losses, lack of access to behavioral health services, and barriers to or unwillingness to seek mental health services.

(3) A 2016 report from the federal centers for disease control and prevention studied suicide data from the year 2012 and found that workers in the farming, fishing, and forestry industries had the highest rate of suicide, eighty-four and one-half suicides per one hundred thousand workers, among the occupational groups that it studied.
The legislature finds that there is an urgent need to develop resources and interventions specifically targeted to helping workers in the agricultural industry and their family members manage their behavioral health needs.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1)(a) The state office of rural health shall convene a task force on behavioral health and suicide prevention in the agricultural industry with members as provided in this subsection.

(i) The secretary of health, or the secretary's designee;
(ii) The secretary of the department of agriculture, or the secretary's designee;
(iii) The secretary of the department of social and health services, or the secretary's designee;
(iv) A representative of Washington State University;
(v) A representative of an association that represents counties;
(vi) One representative each from two different associations representing both farm and ranch families in Washington;
(vii) A representative of the dairy products commission established in chapter 15.44 RCW;
(viii) A representative of the grain commission established in chapter 15.115 RCW;
(ix) A representative of the tree fruit research commission established in chapter 15.26 RCW;
(x) A representative of an association representing rural health clinics;
(xi) A representative of an association representing federally qualified health centers;
(xii) A representative of an association representing community behavioral health agencies;
(xiii) Two representatives of associations representing mental health providers; and
(xiv) One representative of an association representing substance use disorder treatment providers.

(b) The task force shall select cochairs, one of which shall be from the department and the other shall be either representative from (a)(vi) of this subsection.

(2) The task force shall review the following issues:
(a) Data related to the behavioral health status of persons associated with the agricultural industry, including suicide rates,
substance use rates, availability of behavioral health services, and utilization of behavioral health services;

(b) Factors unique to the agricultural industry that affect the behavioral health of persons working in those industries, including factors affecting suicide rates;

(c) Components that should be addressed in the behavioral health and suicide prevention pilot program established in section 3 of this act; and

(d) Options to improve the behavioral health and reduce suicide risk among agricultural workers and their families, including individual focused and community focused strategies.

(3) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the department.

(4) Task force members are not entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses if they are participating on behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for other members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

(5) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor and the committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over health care issues by December 1, 2018.

(6) This section expires July 1, 2019.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall establish a pilot program for behavioral health and suicide prevention for members of the agricultural industry workforce. By March 1, 2019, the pilot program shall be established in two counties that are reliant on the agricultural industry. One county shall be east of the Cascade crest and the other county shall be west of the Cascade crest.

(2) When implementing the pilot program, the department shall consider the report of the task force on behavioral health and suicide prevention in the agricultural industry established in section 2 of this act.

(3) In implementing the pilot program, the department shall contract with an entity that has behavioral health and suicide prevention expertise to develop a free resource for workers in the agricultural industry. The contracting entity must be responsible for constructing and hosting the free resource and linking the free
resource to the web sites of the department, the department of agriculture, and other relevant stakeholders.

(4) At a minimum, the free resource must:

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

(b) Provide a resource to train agricultural industry management, workers, and their family members in suicide risk recognition and referral skills;

(c) Provide a resource to build capacity within the agricultural industry to train individuals to deliver training in person;

(d) Contain model crisis protocols that address behavioral health and suicide risk identification, intervention, reentry, and postvention; and

(e) Contain model marketing materials and messages that promote behavioral health in the agricultural industry.

(5) A preliminary report shall be made to the legislature on the elements and implementation of the pilot program by December 1, 2019. A final report containing information about results of the pilot program and recommendations for improving the pilot program and expanding its availability to other counties shall be made to the legislature by December 1, 2020.

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