

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 1612

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### PARTIAL VETO C 262 L 17 Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Creating a suicide-safer homes project account to support prevention efforts and develop strategies for reducing access to lethal means.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Orwall, Harris, Jinkins, Goodman, Haler, Robinson, Fey, Kilduff and McBride).

**House Committee on Judiciary**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health & Housing**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

#### **Background:**

##### Safe Homes Task Force.

In 2016 legislation was enacted creating a Safe Homes Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force consists of a variety of stakeholders, including the Department of Health (DOH), representatives of suicide prevention organizations, the firearms industry and firearms rights organizations, individuals who have experienced suicide loss or survived suicide attempts, pharmacists and pharmacy organizations, the Department of Veterans Affairs, law enforcement, and others. Task Force membership is divided into a Suicide Prevention and Pharmacy Subcommittee and a Suicide Prevention and Firearms Subcommittee.

The Task Force is administered by the University of Washington School of Social Work, and its responsibilities include:

- developing suicide awareness and prevention messages to be used by firearms dealers, firearms ranges, and pharmacies;
- developing online trainings on suicide awareness and prevention for firearms dealers, firearms ranges, and their employees;
- developing suicide awareness and prevention messages for training for the schools of pharmacy and providing input on training being developed for community pharmacists; and
- creating, implementing, and evaluating a pilot in two counties that have high suicide rates to provide training to firearms dealers, pharmacies, health care providers, and

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law enforcement on pairing suicide awareness and prevention education with the provision of devices for safe storage of firearms and prescription medications.

The Task Force must submit annual reports to the Legislature and file a final report by December 1, 2019.

#### Suicide Assessment, Treatment, and Management Training.

Certain licensed health professionals are required to complete training in suicide assessment, treatment, and management. Some of these professionals, such as licensed social workers, mental health counselors, and psychologists, must complete the training every six years. Other professionals, such as physicians, nurses, physician assistants, chiropractors, and pharmacists, only need to complete the training once. The training must be at least six hours in length, unless only screening and referral elements are appropriate for the professional's scope of practice, in which case the training must be at least three hours in length.

The training must meet minimum standards adopted by the DOH in rule. The standards for six-hour trainings must require content specific to veterans and the assessment of issues related to imminent harm via lethal means or self-injurious behaviors. The three-hour training for pharmacists must include content related to the assessment of issues related to imminent harm via lethal means.

#### Firearm Background Check Requirements.

Under Initiative 594, adopted by the voters in 2014, all firearms sales or transfers are subject to background checks unless specifically exempted. "Transfer" means the intended delivery of a firearm to another person without consideration of payment or promise of payment, including gifts and loans. Any sale or transfer of a firearm where neither party is a dealer must be completed through a dealer. The purchaser or transferee must complete and sign all forms needed for processing the background check. The dealer must process the transaction by complying with all federal and state laws that would apply if the dealer were selling or transferring the firearm from the dealer's inventory, including conducting required background checks of purchasers or transferees.

There are a number of exemptions from the background check requirements of Initiative 594. One exemption applies to bona fide gifts between immediate family members, which are limited to spouses, domestic partners, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, first cousins, aunts, and uncles. Another exemption authorizes a temporary transfer where: the transfer is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to the transferee; the transfer lasts only as long as immediately necessary; and the transferee is not prohibited from possessing firearms.

#### **Summary:**

##### Suicide-Safer Homes Task Force.

The Safe Homes Task Force is renamed the Suicide-Safer Homes Task Force (Task Force) and the Pharmacy Subcommittee is renamed the Health Care Subcommittee. Three additional members representing health care professionals providing suicide prevention training are added to the Task Force and Health Care Subcommittee. Task Force membership should include representatives from geographically diverse and priority populations,

including tribal populations, to the extent possible. The Task Force must gather input on collateral educational materials that will help health care professionals in suicide prevention work. In addition, the Task Force must, in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH), develop and prioritize a list of projects to carry out the Task Force's purposes and submit the prioritized list to the DOH for funding.

A Suicide-Safer Homes Project is created within the DOH for the purpose of accepting private funds for use by the Task Force. A Suicide-Safer Homes Account (Account) is created that consists of funds appropriated by the Legislature and receipts from gifts, grants, donations, or other funds from public or private sources to support the Suicide-Safer Homes Project. Only the Secretary of the DOH or the Secretary's designee may authorize expenditures from the Account to fund projects identified and prioritized by the Task Force. Funds in the Account may be used for developing and producing suicide prevention materials and training, providing financial incentives to encourage firearms dealers and others to participate in suicide prevention training, and implementing community outreach pilot programs.

#### Suicide Assessment, Treatment, and Management Training for Dentists and Dental Hygienists.

Licensed dentists and licensed dental hygienists must complete a one-time training on suicide assessment, treatment, and management. The training must be completed by the end of the dentist's or dental hygienist's first full continuing education reporting period after August 1, 2020, or during his or her first full continuing education reporting period after initial licensure, whichever is later. Three-hour trainings for dentists must include content related to the assessment of issues related to imminent harm via lethal means. The University of Washington School of Dentistry must develop a curriculum for the training by July 1, 2020. The Dental Quality Assurance Commission must exempt licensed dentists from the training requirement if they complete the training curriculum prior to being licensed, and any training completed before August 1, 2020, would count toward meeting the requirement.

#### Exemptions from Firearm Background Check Requirements.

The exemption for bona fide gifts between immediate family members is revised to include loans between immediate family members. For the purposes of this exemption, the term "immediate family member" is revised to include parents-in-law and siblings-in-law.

A temporary transfer of a firearm is exempt from background check requirements if:

- the transfer is intended to prevent suicide or self-inflicted great bodily harm;
- the transfer lasts only as long as reasonably necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm; and
- the person to whom the firearm is transferred does not utilize the firearm for any purpose during the duration of the transfer.

#### **Votes on Final Passage:**

House	88	9	
Senate	47	2	(Senate amended)
House	82	13	(House concurred)

**Effective:** July 23, 2017  
August 1, 2020 (Section 4)

**Partial Veto Summary:** The Governor vetoed the section that addressed exemptions from background checks for firearms transfers between immediate family members and temporary transfers of firearms intended to prevent suicide or self-inflicted bodily harm.