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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1956**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** House Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Leavitt, Griffey, Ryu, Couture, Ramel, Slatter, Reed, Ormsby, Barnard, Callan, Timmons, Kloba, Cheney, Doglio, Paul, Berg, Lekanoff, Reeves, Riccelli, Wylie, Hackney, Pollet, and Shavers; by request of Office of the Governor)

AN ACT Relating to fentanyl and other substance use prevention education; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that overdoses and overdose deaths, particularly from synthetic opioids, have increased in recent years. According to the federal centers for disease control and prevention, among persons aged 14 through 18, overdose deaths increased 94 percent from 2019 to 2020 and 20 percent from 2020 to 2021. In 2021, over 75 percent of all drug overdose deaths involved opioids, with synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, accounting for nearly 88 percent of those deaths. Between 2022 and 2023, Washington saw the largest increase in overdose deaths of any state at 40 percent.

(2) The legislature recognizes that fatal overdose risk among adolescents is increasing due to widespread availability of illicitly manufactured fentanyl, proliferation of counterfeit pills resembling prescription drugs but containing illicit drugs, and ease of purchasing pills through social media. The United States drug enforcement administration states that there is significant risk that illegal drugs have been intentionally contaminated with fentanyl. As a result, many young people may ingest a lethal dose without knowing that they are consuming fentanyl.

(3) The legislature acknowledges that the level of public health crisis created by use of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids requires an immediate, substantial, and coordinated effort by national, state, and local public health, social service, and educational agencies working together.

(4) The legislature also acknowledges that the popularity of drugs grows and wanes forming distinct drug epidemics, similar to disease epidemics. As the popularity and availability of synthetic opioids wanes, it is likely that some other substance will pose the next acute public health crisis.

(5) Therefore, in order to combat the current public health crisis of abuse of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, and to be prepared to address the next drug epidemic before it reaches crisis level, the legislature intends to direct the state department of health to deploy a statewide substance use prevention and awareness campaign that evolves to address the substance or substances with the greatest impact on the health of Washington youth and their families, diverse regions and communities, and the broader public. The legislature also intends for the public education system to actively incorporate campaign messages and materials in classrooms, as well as in family and community communications.

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

(1)(a) The secretary shall annually develop and deploy a statewide multimedia substance use prevention and awareness campaign that evolves to address the substance or substances with the greatest impact on the health of Washington youth and their families, diverse regions and communities, and the broader public.

(b) Campaign messages and materials must include information on the "good Samaritan overdose law," RCW 69.50.315.

(c) Campaign messages and materials designed for target groups must connect and be reinforced by the statewide messages and materials.

(d) Campaign messages and materials must be actively distributed to diverse regions and communities, for example via stores, schools, churches, and community organizations, and through multiple formats, for example via social media, posters, and advertisements.

(2) The campaign must be developed in partnership with the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities created in RCW 43.20.275.

(3) The 2024 and 2025 campaigns must focus on increasing the awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, including the high possibility that other drugs are contaminated with synthetic opioids and that even trace amounts of synthetic opioids can be lethal. These campaigns must also provide overdose prevention and addiction treatment information.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.300 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall collaborate with the department of health to develop age-appropriate substance use prevention and awareness materials for school and classroom uses. These materials must be periodically updated to align with the annual substance use prevention and awareness campaign described in section 2 of this act.

(2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall actively distribute the materials developed under subsection (1) of this section to school districts, public schools, educational service districts, and community-based organizations that provide extended learning opportunities, and strongly encourage the incorporation of age-appropriate materials in classrooms, as well as in family and community communications.

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