

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 726

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to encourage the development of higher education specific protocols for the prevention, intervention, and postvention of death by suicide.

WHEREAS, suicide is the second-leading cause of death among college and university students in the United States and is the third-leading cause of death for Tennesseans aged eighteen to twenty-four; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly recognizes that suicide prevention is a vital issue to the State of Tennessee, and the General Assembly, in partnership with the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN), implements the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention (as revised in 2017) based on the 2012 revised National Strategy for Suicide Prevention; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee is a national leader in the effort to prevent suicide, being one of the first states to develop a lifespan state suicide prevention plan; and

WHEREAS, the Preamble to the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention notes that suicide prevention must recognize and affirm the cultural diversity, value, dignity, and importance of each person; and

WHEREAS, the Preamble further recognizes that the success of Tennessee's Strategy for Suicide Prevention clearly rests on the willingness of individuals, communities, organizations, and leaders at all levels to collaborate in the promotion of suicide prevention; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention specifically calls upon the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network to "encourage the implementation of suicide prevention training in Tennessee colleges and universities, and the inclusion of suicide prevention training in professional licensure requirements"; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention also specifically references

colleges among those entities and institutions that should be advised about the availability of postvention services by the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network and other agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council of the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network has established the Tennessee Higher Education Suicide Prevention Task Force to unite colleges and universities throughout Tennessee toward the goal of suicide prevention, with appointed members including delegates from twenty-two colleges and universities throughout the State of Tennessee, in addition to outreach initiatives involving the Tennessee Board of Regents, the University of Tennessee system, Tennessee's six locally governed universities, the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly encouraged the development of information and resources to assist in the training of mental health and substance abuse professionals by enacting the Kenneth and Madge Tullis, M.D., Suicide Prevention Training Act of 2017; required public school teachers and principals to have annual in-service training on suicide prevention by the enactment of the Jason Flatt Act of 2007; and extended the in-service training for public school teachers and principals to require all school system employees to have such training and required the Department of Education to establish a model policy on student suicide prevention to assist school systems in developing their own policies for student suicide prevention by enactment of Jared's Law in 2016; the General Assembly finds it further necessary to encourage the same of Tennessee's higher education community and stakeholders; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network and each of its relevant partners and institutions are hereby encouraged to collaborate with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to offer suicide prevention materials, including program

information on their respective websites, and to provide incoming postsecondary students with information about mental health topics, including suicide prevention and depression resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, in partnership with the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network and in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, is encouraged to develop and implement a higher education specific protocol that is based upon national best practices, as well as innovative approaches that address suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies among Tennessee's college populations, and is also designed to advise students and staff on suicide prevention programs available on and off campus.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each institution of higher education in Tennessee is encouraged to make available to all incoming students information about mental health topics, and specifically, information pertaining to depression and to suicide prevention resources. The information provided to students should include available mental health services and other support services, including student-run organizations for individuals at risk of or affected by suicide.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association.