

1           **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION DECLARING MENTAL HEALTH**  
2                   **ISSUES TO BE A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AT UTAH**  
3                           **HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

4                                   2017 GENERAL SESSION

5                                   STATE OF UTAH

6                           **Chief Sponsor: Edward H. Redd**

7                           Senate Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

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9   **LONG TITLE**

10 **General Description:**

11           This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor declares mental health  
12 issues to be a public health crisis at Utah higher education institutions and strongly  
13 urges Utah's government and community groups to seek productive, long-term solutions  
14 to address the crisis.

15 **Highlighted Provisions:**

16           This resolution:

- 17           ▶ declares mental health issues to be a public health crisis at Utah higher education  
18 institutions;
- 19           ▶ recognizes Utah's high rate of suicide and attempted suicide due to mental health  
20 issues; and
- 21           ▶ strongly urges state agencies, local health authorities, non-profit groups, and higher  
22 education entities to seek productive, long-term solutions to address this crisis.

23 **Special Clauses:**

24           None

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26 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

27           WHEREAS, mental health issues at Utah higher education institutions constitute a



28 public health crisis;

29 WHEREAS, Utah ranks in the top 10 for most suicides in the nation;

30 WHEREAS, Utah ranks fifth in the nation for most youth suicides;

31 WHEREAS, over 100 students enrolled in Utah higher education institutions attempted  
32 suicide during the 2015 academic year;

33 WHEREAS, 15 of those higher education students who attempted suicide were  
34 tragically successful;

35 WHEREAS, many students who need mental health services are unable to access  
36 treatment from university-sponsored mental health services due to wait lists that can be as long  
37 as four to six weeks;

38 WHEREAS, the International Association of Counseling Services' (IACS) national  
39 recommendation is one full-time counselor per 1,000-1,500 students at institutions of higher  
40 education;

41 WHEREAS, Utah State University, the University of Utah, Utah Valley University,  
42 Weber State University, and Dixie State University do not meet IACS national  
43 recommendations;

44 WHEREAS, communities where state-run universities, colleges, and technical colleges  
45 are located may have mental health treatment and crisis intervention resources that are not  
46 readily available to students on campuses; and

47 WHEREAS, partnerships and collaboration between university-sponsored mental  
48 health services and community mental health treatment and crisis intervention resources may  
49 result in improved access to crisis and treatment interventions for students on campuses as well  
50 as the general public and result in a decrease in suicide attempts and improved mental health  
51 outcomes on campuses and in the community:

52 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the  
53 Governor concurring therein, declares mental health issues to be a public health crisis at Utah  
54 higher education institutions and strongly urges the Department of Health, Department of  
55 Human Services, Department of Public Safety, local health departments, local mental health  
56 authorities and providers, the Utah chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Utah  
57 chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the Utah Board of Regents, and  
58 public institutions of higher education, including universities, colleges, and technical colleges

59 to:

60 (1) form local coalitions and work collaboratively on a local, community, and  
61 statewide basis to identify, promote, and share available higher education mental health  
62 services and local community mental health resources, including crisis prevention and  
63 interventions;

64 (2) identify successes from collaborative efforts as well as ongoing deficiencies in  
65 mental health treatment and crisis prevention and interventions at institutions of higher  
66 education that cannot be adequately addressed through appropriate partnerships and sharing of  
67 community and higher education mental health resources; and

68 (3) provide a report, including specific findings of collaborative successes and ongoing  
69 mental health services deficiencies, and make recommendations for possible solutions to the  
70 Health and Human Services Interim Committee, the Higher Education Appropriations  
71 Subcommittee, and the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee by October 31, 2017.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Utah's  
73 Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Department of Public Safety; all  
74 county and local mental health authorities; the Utah National Alliance on Mental Illness; the  
75 Utah Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; the Utah Board of Regents;  
76 and each of the presidents of Utah's eight public higher education institutions.

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**Legislative Review Note**  
**Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel**