
HOUSE BILL 1354

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Mosbrucker and Orwall

1 AN ACT Relating to suicide review teams; amending RCW 70.02.050;
2 adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; creating a new section;
3 and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the work of
6 the state suicide prevention plan steering committee has produced a
7 valuable, comprehensive suicide prevention plan. This plan finds that
8 about one-half of mental health conditions appear by age 14 and
9 identifies a need for preventing youth suicide risk farther upstream
10 in a child's life.

11 (2) The legislature intends to establish a youth suicide review
12 team to complement the work of the state suicide prevention plan
13 steering committee by providing a focused investigation of the lives
14 of youth who have died by suicide. The work of the review team shall:

15 (a) Provide a more detailed picture of the lives of youth who
16 have died by suicide in Washington to allow for more targeted
17 intervention programs to reach youth earlier in their lives; and

18 (b) Help determine whether the COVID-19 pandemic or the state's
19 response to the pandemic have impacted youth suicide rates.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 (1) The department shall establish the Washington youth suicide
4 review team to review the circumstances related to suicides occurring
5 among youth up to age 24. The Washington youth suicide review shall:

6 (a) Perform an in-depth review of each instance of persons under
7 24 years old who have died by suicide in Washington during the 2020
8 calendar year. The review may not include suicides that occur within
9 the boundaries of an Indian reservation if the tribal government
10 opposes the review;

11 (b) Analyze circumstances affecting the lives of the persons who
12 have been reviewed to ascertain the existence of any common factors
13 that may have contributed to the persons' suicide. The analysis may
14 include a systematic review of medical records, including mental
15 health information, home interviews of parents and caretakers of the
16 person, analysis of individual case information, and the impact of
17 the COVID-19 pandemic and the state's response to the pandemic; and

18 (c) Compile statistics to establish a description of the lives of
19 youth in Washington who have died by suicide and recommendations for
20 targeting intervention programs to reach youth at risk for suicide
21 earlier in life.

22 (2)(a) The Washington youth suicide review team consists of the
23 following members appointed by the governor, with the advice of the
24 secretary of health:

25 (i) One person who is licensed as either a physician under
26 chapter 18.71 RCW or osteopathic physician under chapter 18.57 RCW
27 who practices as a psychiatrist and works primarily with youth;

28 (ii) One psychologist licensed under chapter 18.83 RCW who works
29 primarily with youth;

30 (iii) One person who is licensed as either an advanced clinical
31 social worker or independent clinical social worker under chapter
32 18.225 RCW who works primarily with youth;

33 (iv) One person who is a member of the clergy, as defined in RCW
34 26.44.020;

35 (v) Either an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed
36 under chapter 18.79 RCW, a physician assistant licensed under chapter
37 18.71A RCW, or an osteopathic physician assistant licensed under
38 chapter 18.57A RCW who works primarily with youth;

39 (vi) One representative of a tribal health department;

1 (vii) One representative of an organization that advocates for
2 persons with mental illness and their family members;

3 (viii) One county coroner or medical examiner;

4 (ix) One person who is a member of the education community with
5 experience related to existing and potential suicide prevention
6 efforts for students in primary and secondary schools;

7 (x) One person who is a member of the law enforcement community
8 with experience related to existing and potential suicide prevention
9 efforts for youth who are involved with the law enforcement system;

10 (xi) One person who is a member of the child protection system
11 with experience related to existing and potential suicide prevention
12 efforts for youth involved with the child protection system; and

13 (xii) One family member of a youth who died from suicide.

14 (b) In addition to the members identified in (a) of this
15 subsection, the membership of the review team may vote to add one
16 additional member with experience and perspectives that the review
17 team determines may inform the activities of the review team.

18 (3) The department shall convene the meetings of the Washington
19 youth suicide review team and assist the review team with its
20 activities, as necessary, including the collection of information
21 related to the work of the review team.

22 (4)(a) All health care information collected as part of the
23 Washington youth suicide review team is confidential, subject to the
24 restrictions on disclosure provided for in chapter 70.02 RCW. When
25 documents are collected as part of the work of the Washington youth
26 suicide review team, the records may be used solely by the review
27 team and the department of health for the purposes of supporting the
28 activities of the review team.

29 (b) No identifying information related to the deceased person,
30 the person's guardians, or anyone interviewed as part of the work of
31 the Washington youth suicide review team may be disclosed. Any such
32 information shall be redacted from any records produced as part of
33 the review team's activities.

34 (c) Any witness statements or documents collected from witnesses,
35 or summaries or analyses of those statements or records prepared
36 exclusively for purposes of the Washington youth suicide review team,
37 are not subject to public disclosure, discovery, subpoena, or
38 introduction into evidence in any administrative, civil, or criminal
39 proceeding related to the death of a person reviewed. This provision
40 does not restrict or limit the discovery or subpoena from a health

1 care provider of records or documents maintained by such health care
2 provider in the ordinary course of business, whether or not such
3 records or documents may have been supplied to a local health
4 department pursuant to this section. This provision does not restrict
5 or limit the discovery or subpoena of documents from such witnesses
6 simply because a copy of a document was collected as part of the
7 Washington youth suicide review team.

8 (5) The Washington youth suicide review team shall report its
9 findings and recommendations to the governor and the committees of
10 the legislature with jurisdiction over issues related to suicide
11 prevention for youth by June 1, 2023. The report must include
12 information regarding the feasibility of establishing locally based
13 youth suicide review teams. Any compilation of data must be
14 summarized in a manner so as to prevent the identification of any
15 specific person who was the subject of review.

16 **Sec. 3.** RCW 70.02.050 and 2017 c 298 s 2 are each amended to
17 read as follows:

18 (1) A health care provider or health care facility may disclose
19 health care information, except for information and records related
20 to sexually transmitted diseases which are addressed in RCW
21 70.02.220, about a patient without the patient's authorization to the
22 extent a recipient needs to know the information, if the disclosure
23 is:

24 (a) To a person who the provider or facility reasonably believes
25 is providing health care to the patient;

26 (b) To any other person who requires health care information for
27 health care education, or to provide planning, quality assurance,
28 peer review, or administrative, legal, financial, actuarial services
29 to, or other health care operations for or on behalf of the health
30 care provider or health care facility; or for assisting the health
31 care provider or health care facility in the delivery of health care
32 and the health care provider or health care facility reasonably
33 believes that the person:

34 (i) Will not use or disclose the health care information for any
35 other purpose; and

36 (ii) Will take appropriate steps to protect the health care
37 information;

38 (c) To any person if the health care provider or health care
39 facility believes, in good faith, that use or disclosure is necessary

1 to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or
2 safety of a person or the public, and the information is disclosed
3 only to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the
4 threat, including the target of the threat. There is no obligation
5 under this chapter on the part of the provider or facility to so
6 disclose; or

7 (d) For payment, including information necessary for a recipient
8 to make a claim, or for a claim to be made on behalf of a recipient
9 for aid, insurance, or medical assistance to which he or she may be
10 entitled.

11 (2) A health care provider shall disclose health care
12 information, except for information and records related to sexually
13 transmitted diseases, unless otherwise authorized in RCW 70.02.220,
14 about a patient without the patient's authorization if the disclosure
15 is:

16 (a) To federal, state, or local public health authorities, to the
17 extent the health care provider is required by law to report health
18 care information; when needed to determine compliance with state or
19 federal licensure, certification or registration rules or laws, or to
20 investigate unprofessional conduct or ability to practice with
21 reasonable skill and safety under chapter 18.130 RCW. Any health care
22 information obtained under this subsection is exempt from public
23 inspection and copying pursuant to chapter 42.56 RCW; ((~~or~~))

24 (b) When needed to protect the public health; or

25 (c) As requested by the department of health as needed to support
26 the activities of the Washington youth suicide review team
27 established in section 2 of this act.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act expires July 1, 2023.

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