
HOUSE BILL 2671

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Representatives Wilcox, Jinkins, Dye, Orwall, Schmick, Cody, DeBolt, Walsh, Maycumber, Griffey, Barkis, Haler, and Buys

1 AN ACT Relating to improving the behavioral health of people in
2 the agricultural industry; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW;
3 creating new sections; 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
6 agricultural industry is an integral part of Washington's economy and
7 sense of common identity, and that the behavioral health of workers
8 in the industry and their family members is a statewide concern.

9 (2) Several factors related to the agricultural industry may
10 affect the behavioral health of workers in the agricultural industry,
11 including job-related isolation and demands, stressful work
12 environments, the heightened potential for financial losses, lack of
13 access to behavioral health services, and barriers to or
14 unwillingness to seek mental health services.

15 (3) A 2016 report from the federal centers for disease control
16 and prevention studied suicide data from the year 2012 and found that
17 workers in the farming, fishing, and forestry industries had the
18 highest rate of suicide, eighty-four and one-half suicides per one
19 hundred thousand workers, among the occupational groups that it
20 studied.

1 (4) The legislature finds that there is an urgent need to develop
2 resources and interventions specifically targeted to helping workers
3 in the agricultural industry and their family members manage their
4 behavioral health needs.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) The state office of rural health
6 shall convene a task force on behavioral health and suicide
7 prevention in the agricultural industry with members as provided in
8 this subsection.

9 (i) The secretary of health, or the secretary's designee;

10 (ii) The secretary of the department of agriculture, or the
11 secretary's designee;

12 (iii) The secretary of the department of social and health
13 services, or the secretary's designee;

14 (iv) A representative of Washington State University;

15 (v) A representative of an association that represents counties;

16 (vi) One representative each from two different associations
17 representing both farm and ranch families in Washington;

18 (vii) A representative of the dairy products commission
19 established in chapter 15.44 RCW;

20 (viii) A representative of the grain commission established in
21 chapter 15.115 RCW;

22 (ix) A representative of the tree fruit research commission
23 established in chapter 15.26 RCW;

24 (x) A representative of an association representing rural health
25 clinics;

26 (xi) A representative of an association representing federally
27 qualified health centers;

28 (xii) A representative of an association representing community
29 behavioral health agencies;

30 (xiii) Two representatives of associations representing mental
31 health providers; and

32 (xiv) One representative of an association representing substance
33 use disorder treatment providers.

34 (b) The task force shall select cochairs, one of which shall be
35 from the department and the other shall be either representative from
36 (a)(vi) of this subsection.

37 (2) The task force shall review the following issues:

38 (a) Data related to the behavioral health status of persons
39 associated with the agricultural industry, including suicide rates,

1 substance use rates, availability of behavioral health services, and
2 utilization of behavioral health services;

3 (b) Factors unique to the agricultural industry that affect the
4 behavioral health of persons working in those industries, including
5 factors affecting suicide rates;

6 (c) Components that should be addressed in the behavioral health
7 and suicide prevention pilot program established in section 3 of this
8 act; and

9 (d) Options to improve the behavioral health and reduce suicide
10 risk among agricultural workers and their families, including
11 individual focused and community focused strategies.

12 (3) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the
13 department.

14 (4) Task force members are not entitled to reimbursement for
15 travel expenses if they are participating on behalf of an employer,
16 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
17 other members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

18 (5) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations
19 to the governor and the committees of the legislature with
20 jurisdiction over health care issues by December 1, 2018.

21 (6) This section expires July 1, 2019.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70
23 RCW to read as follows:

24 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
25 specific purpose, the department shall establish a pilot program for
26 behavioral health and suicide prevention for members of the
27 agricultural industry workforce. By March 1, 2019, the pilot program
28 shall be established in two counties that are reliant on the
29 agricultural industry. One county shall be east of the Cascade crest
30 and the other county shall be west of the Cascade crest.

31 (2) When implementing the pilot program, the department shall
32 consider the report of the task force on behavioral health and
33 suicide prevention in the agricultural industry established in
34 section 2 of this act.

35 (3) In implementing the pilot program, the department shall
36 contract with an entity that has behavioral health and suicide
37 prevention expertise to develop a free resource for workers in the
38 agricultural industry. The contracting entity must be responsible for
39 constructing and hosting the free resource and linking the free

1 resource to the web sites of the department, the department of
2 agriculture, and other relevant stakeholders.

3 (4) At a minimum, the free resource must:

4 (a) Be made publicly available through a web-based portal or a
5 telephone support line;

6 (b) Provide a resource to train agricultural industry management,
7 workers, and their family members in suicide risk recognition and
8 referral skills;

9 (c) Provide a resource to build capacity within the agricultural
10 industry to train individuals to deliver training in person;

11 (d) Contain model crisis protocols that address behavioral health
12 and suicide risk identification, intervention, reentry, and
13 postvention; and

14 (e) Contain model marketing materials and messages that promote
15 behavioral health in the agricultural industry.

16 (5) A preliminary report shall be made to the legislature on the
17 elements and implementation of the pilot program by December 1, 2019.
18 A final report containing information about results of the pilot
19 program and recommendations for improving the pilot program and
20 expanding its availability to other counties shall be made to the
21 legislature by December 1, 2020.

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