
SENATE BILL 5571

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe, Litzow, Keiser, Dammeier, Rolfes, Rivers, Mullet, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Shin, Ranker, Kline, and Murray

Read first time 02/04/13. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing public awareness of mental illness
2 and its consequences; and adding a new chapter to Title 71 RCW.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that public awareness
5 and understanding of mental health and mental illnesses is often
6 inaccurate or underdeveloped. Too often, families with children and
7 adults in need of assistance or treatment do not know where to go for
8 help or how to access mental health services. Teachers, coaches, and
9 others who come into regular contact with children often observe
10 concerning behavior but do not know whether or how to connect them with
11 appropriate interventions. To increase the well-being of people with
12 mental health issues, as well as increase the safety of the general
13 public, it is the legislature's intent to establish a comprehensive and
14 effective public awareness campaign to reduce the stigma of mental
15 illness, to aid in the early identification of those with mental health
16 issues, and to improve the prevention and intervention of serious
17 mental illnesses.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to funds appropriated for this
2 purpose, the department of social and health services, in collaboration
3 with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the
4 department of health, and the regional support networks, must develop
5 and conduct an ongoing public awareness and education campaign
6 regarding mental health and mental illness in both adults and children.

7 (2) The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness and educate
8 families and the general public about the benefits of early
9 identification, appropriate referral, and appropriate treatment of
10 those with mental health issues.

11 (3) The department of social and health services must provide
12 information about the following:

13 (a) Mental health stigma and how it affects a person's ability to
14 achieve wellness and full social integration;

15 (b) Efficacy of mental health treatment and the importance of early
16 identification;

17 (c) Prevalence of mental health issues in adolescents and children;

18 (d) Factors that may cause or contribute to mental health issues;
19 and

20 (e) Recommendations for how to recognize mental illness and respond
21 appropriately.

22 (4) The department of social and health services must use multiple
23 communication strategies in the campaign depending on available funds,
24 including developing or using an existing interactive web site,
25 conducting community training, and disseminating informative print
26 materials.

27 (5) In addition to the collaboration described in subsection (1) of
28 this section, the department of social and health services must also
29 seek participation and input from mental health advocacy groups,
30 children and family nonprofit organizations, violence prevention
31 associations, and Washington's tribes or tribal organizations.

32 (6) The campaign must be proportional across the state and targeted
33 to reach persons from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds
34 who live in geographically isolated areas, who have low literacy skills
35 or limited ability in the English language, and who are part of special
36 populations, including the homeless and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and
37 transgender youth.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Sections 1 and 2 of this act constitute a
2 new chapter in Title 71 RCW.

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