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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6514**

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AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2018 Regular Session

**State of Washington                      65th Legislature                      2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Brown, O'Ban, Darneille, Palumbo, and Saldaña)

READ FIRST TIME 02/02/18.

1            AN ACT Relating to implementing a comprehensive approach to  
2 suicide prevention and behavioral health in higher education, with  
3 enhanced services to student veterans; adding new sections to chapter  
4 28B.20 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28B.77 RCW; creating a  
5 new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

7            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**    (1) Washington has been a leader in  
8 addressing suicide as a public health issue. The legislature intends  
9 for Washington to continue its leadership by supporting the creation  
10 of comprehensive suicide prevention and behavioral health initiatives  
11 for postsecondary students. In 2015, the legislature created the  
12 mental health and suicide prevention in higher education task force.  
13 The task force was charged with determining the policies, resources,  
14 and technical assistance needed to support postsecondary institutions  
15 in improving access to behavioral health services and improving  
16 suicide prevention responses. In November 2016, the task force issued  
17 its report on mental health and suicide prevention in higher  
18 education.

19            (2) According to the task force report:

20            (a) The 2005 American college health assessment survey found that  
21 nine and one-half percent of students seriously considered suicide,

1 one and one-half percent of students nationwide have attempted  
2 suicide, and less than twenty percent were in treatment. According to  
3 the 2015 American college health association national college health  
4 assessment, seventy-five percent of postsecondary students reported  
5 feeling overwhelmed and thirty percent reported feeling so depressed  
6 it was difficult to function. More than one-third of students  
7 reported anxiety as negatively impacting academics and almost one-  
8 quarter said depression negatively impacted academics;

9 (b) There is incomplete data on suicide deaths among Washington's  
10 postsecondary students and the availability of behavioral health  
11 resources on Washington's campuses. There is currently no statewide  
12 system in place to track this data;

13 (c) Lack of funding for behavioral health resources across all  
14 sectors is the largest barrier to providing services for  
15 postsecondary students statewide;

16 (d) Due to funding constraints, the level of professional mental  
17 and behavioral health counseling is often limited for postsecondary  
18 institutions in all sectors. For example, six institutions in the  
19 public two-year sector servicing nearly fifty thousand students have  
20 either no professional mental health providers to counsel students or  
21 have such limited resources that the counselor to student ratio was  
22 as low as one to nearly eight thousand five hundred in 2014-2015.

23 (3) The legislature also recognizes that, as of 2016, there were  
24 over sixteen thousand student veterans and dependents enrolled in  
25 Washington's community and technical colleges, and approximately four  
26 thousand veterans and dependents enrolled in Washington's four-year  
27 institutions of higher education. The legislature recognizes that the  
28 risk for suicide is significantly higher among veterans when compared  
29 to nonveteran adults in the United States and that student veterans  
30 face unique challenges and often have vastly different life  
31 experiences from traditional students. According to a study presented  
32 a few years ago at an annual convention of the American psychological  
33 association, almost half of military veterans who are enrolled in  
34 college have contemplated suicide at some point and twenty percent  
35 have planned to kill themselves.

36 (4) The legislature intends to implement task force  
37 recommendations by:

38 (a) Creating a publicly available statewide resource for  
39 postsecondary institutions;

40 (b) Developing and centralizing data collection; and

1 (c) Creating a grant program for resource-challenged institutions  
2 to help develop suicide prevention programs in those institutions,  
3 which may include for example, enhancing treatment services to  
4 student veterans; creating campus-wide crisis services; expanding  
5 existing crisis plans to integrate suicide intervention; reentry,  
6 including medical leave that supports reentry; postvention; and  
7 creating links and referral systems between campus behavioral health  
8 resources and community-based mental health resources.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.20  
10 RCW to read as follows:

11 (1) Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this  
12 specific purpose, an entity within the University of Washington  
13 school of social work that has expertise in suicide prevention, in  
14 collaboration with the student achievement council, shall develop a  
15 statewide resource for behavioral health and suicide prevention for  
16 the state's postsecondary institutions.

17 (2) To establish the components of the statewide resource, the  
18 entity shall convene and consult with a work group that consists of  
19 representatives from stakeholder groups the entity deems appropriate.  
20 The entity must consider representatives from those organizations  
21 listed in the mental health and suicide prevention in higher  
22 education task force, created by chapter 67, Laws of 2015. At a  
23 minimum, the stakeholders in the work group must include:

- 24 (a) Representation from a tribal college;
- 25 (b) Representation from a veterans training support center;
- 26 (c) Representation from students and families;
- 27 (d) Representatives selected by the educational opportunity gap  
28 oversight and accountability committee;
- 29 (e) Representation from a community behavioral health provider;
- 30 (f) A suicide prevention expert;
- 31 (g) Representation from the department of health; and
- 32 (h) Three institutional counseling center directors or executive  
33 directors to include one from each of the following: A public four-  
34 year college or university, a private, nonprofit institution, and a  
35 community and technical college.

36 (3) The entity must be responsible for constructing and hosting  
37 the statewide resource and linking the resource to the student  
38 achievement council's and the department of health's web sites.

39 (4) At a minimum, the statewide resource must:

1 (a) Be made publicly available through a web-based portal or a  
2 support line;

3 (b) Provide a free curriculum to train faculty, staff, and  
4 students in suicide recognition and referral skills and in the  
5 specific needs of student veterans;

6 (c) Provide a resource to build capacity within the institutions  
7 to train individuals to deliver training in person;

8 (d) Contain model crisis protocols, per sector, that include  
9 behavioral health and suicide identification, intervention, reentry,  
10 and postvention;

11 (e) Contain model marketing materials and messages that promote  
12 student behavioral health on college campuses;

13 (f) Develop capacity for an annual conference for postsecondary  
14 institutions seeking to address students' behavioral health and  
15 suicide prevention needs. The entity must be responsible for hosting  
16 the first conference for postsecondary institutions; and

17 (g) Include resources that will serve diverse communities and  
18 underrepresented populations, including resources that are culturally  
19 relevant.

20 (5) The statewide resource must be made available to  
21 postsecondary institutions by June 30, 2020.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.77  
23 RCW to read as follows:

24 (1) Subject to availability of amounts appropriated for this  
25 specific purpose, the suicide prevention in higher education grant  
26 program is established. The purpose of the grant program is to  
27 provide funding to postsecondary institutions for the institutions to  
28 create partnerships with health care entities to provide mental  
29 health, behavioral health, and suicide prevention to students in  
30 their institutions.

31 (2)(a) The council shall administer the grant program in  
32 accordance with this section and in collaboration with the work group  
33 convened by the entity within the University of Washington school of  
34 social work specified under section 2 of this act. The council shall  
35 establish minimum criteria that grant recipients must meet to be  
36 awarded a grant. The grant program must be implemented by November 1,  
37 2019.

38 (b) The council must award the first six grants created under  
39 this section to public institutions of higher education. When

1 selecting the recipients of the first six grants under this  
2 subsection, the council must consult with the state board for  
3 community and technical colleges. The council must identify which  
4 public institutions of higher education have the greatest need, have  
5 a clear and strong demonstration of willingness from leadership to  
6 utilize the statewide resources created under section 2 of this act,  
7 and can develop partnerships to enhance capacity. From those  
8 identified public institutions of higher education, proposals that  
9 enhance treatment services to student veterans must be given  
10 priority. Once the first six grants are awarded, the council may  
11 award grants to other postsecondary institutions that meet the  
12 council's criteria.

13 (3) For the purposes of this section, "postsecondary  
14 institutions" means institutions of higher education as defined in  
15 RCW 28B.10.016, degree-granting institutions as defined in RCW  
16 28B.85.010, private vocational schools as defined under RCW  
17 28C.10.020, and school as defined in RCW 18.16.020.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.20  
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 (1) Beginning June 1, 2019, and every June 1st thereafter until  
21 2022, postsecondary institutions shall submit a report to the entity  
22 within the University of Washington school of social work specified  
23 under section 2 of this act for the purposes of establishing a  
24 baseline for behavioral health concerns and responses at the  
25 institutions of higher education.

26 (2) The annual report must include the following information as  
27 reported to the postsecondary institution, in compliance with the  
28 entity's established data collection requirements, and if an  
29 institution does not collect or have access to the information it  
30 must indicate this in the report:

31 (a) The awareness of students, faculty, and staff regarding  
32 behavioral health and suicide prevention resources;

33 (b) The institution's counselor-to-student ratio;

34 (c) The number of students referred to off-campus behavioral  
35 health providers;

36 (d) The number of students identifying emotional distress as  
37 reasons for withdrawal;

38 (e) The number of student suicide deaths;

1 (f) The number of student suicide attempts that result in  
2 hospitalization;

3 (g) Information about dissemination of material to students about  
4 behavioral health resources that are available on and off campus;

5 (h) Confirmation of campus plans for suicide recognition and  
6 referral training that identifies groups receiving the required  
7 training and which groups are recommended to receive training in the  
8 future;

9 (i) The entity or entities on campus responsible for the  
10 development and maintenance of the campus crisis plan that integrate  
11 policies for suicide identification, intervention, reentry, and  
12 postvention;

13 (j) The campus point person or persons responsible for the crisis  
14 plan; and

15 (k) Information about behavioral health services and supports  
16 available to veterans on campus.

17 (3) For purposes of this section, "postsecondary institutions"  
18 has the same meaning as that term is defined in section 3 of this  
19 act.

20 (4) This section expires December 31, 2022.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.20  
22 RCW to read as follows:

23 (1) By December 31, 2018, for the purposes of collecting data on  
24 suicide prevention and behavioral health in higher education, the  
25 entity within the University of Washington school of social work  
26 specified under section 2 of this act shall identify data, methods  
27 for data collection, and data definitions to be used by postsecondary  
28 institutions required to submit annual reports under section 4 of  
29 this act. The entity shall collaborate with the postsecondary  
30 institutions, as defined in section 3 of this act, in establishing  
31 data collection requirements and criteria.

32 (2) The entity shall aggregate the information it receives by  
33 sector and, by December 1st of each year, the entity must submit an  
34 aggregated summary report to the relevant committees of the  
35 legislature. The entity shall serve as the depository for annual  
36 reports submitted by institutions of higher education under section 4  
37 of this act.

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