
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2194

State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1994 Regular Session

By House Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Representatives L. Johnson, Dellwo, Wood, Cothorn, Jones, Brown, J. Kohl, H. Myers, Wineberry, Flemming, Roland, Romero, Eide, Johanson and Anderson)

Read first time 02/04/94.

1 AN ACT Relating to suicide prevention; adding a new chapter to
2 Title 70 RCW; and making an appropriation.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that suicide is one of
5 the most serious and tragic phenomena affecting children and youth, the
6 third leading cause of death of young persons from fifteen to twenty-
7 four years of age, and the second leading cause of death for youth from
8 fifteen to nineteen years of age, following unintentional injuries and
9 homicide. The suicide rate among teenagers, in today's age of rage
10 where anger is turned inwards in the form of depression, has increased
11 forty percent from 1980 to 1990. Over forty percent of teenage girls
12 and twenty-five percent of teenage boys have seriously considered
13 suicide; and one out of every seven teenagers has attempted suicide at
14 least once. Between 1979 and 1988, according to national figures, the
15 suicide rate for the ten to fourteen year old age group alone increased
16 seventy-five percent, while the murder rate increased forty-two
17 percent.

18 Suicide is a dimension of violence that is directed towards self
19 instead of others, an implosion rather than an explosion, in response

1 to a sense of hopelessness from troubling problems associated with drug
2 and alcohol abuse, loneliness, depression, and relationship
3 difficulties in a society increasingly characterized by dysfunctional
4 families, new economic realities, and the widening gap between rising
5 youthful aspirations and fewer opportunities.

6 Suicide can be preventable through intervention strategies that
7 involve crisis intervention through trained professionals; attention
8 towards the amelioration of those personal conditions that engender
9 anger and related depression; education programs for managing personal
10 problems that augment self-esteem; and through control of contagion and
11 unresolved grief in crisis situations. It is imperative to address
12 this tragic phenomenon not only as a serious public health and safety
13 problem, but in the interests of assuring the future of American
14 society with healthy role models fully capable of participating and
15 contributing to the welfare of their own families and the community.

16 The purpose of this act is to establish a state-wide suicide
17 prevention program that develops and implements state and local
18 strategies for addressing youth suicide through the schools and
19 throughout the communities.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** Unless the context clearly requires
21 otherwise, the following definitions apply throughout sections 2
22 through 8 of this act:

23 (1) "Department" means the department of health.

24 (2) "Program" means a youth suicide prevention program established
25 under section 3 of this act.

26 (3) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of health.

27 (4) "Youth services bureau" means a program established under
28 sections 2 through 8 of this act.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) A state-wide youth suicide prevention
30 program is established to be administered by the secretary in
31 consultation with:

32 (a) The superintendent of public instruction;

33 (b) The department of community, trade, and economic development;

34 (c) Local government;

35 (d) The department of social and health services;

36 (e) Local community agencies involved in suicide prevention;

37 (f) Local community mental health programs; and

1 (g) Such other entities as the secretary deems appropriate.

2 (2) The secretary shall develop the suicide prevention program,
3 including:

4 (a) An assessment of data and identification of the populations at
5 risk, including effective programs currently available, and review of
6 literature for models that have proven effective;

7 (b) Development and implementation of techniques for minimizing
8 suicide contagion;

9 (c) Policy development for strategies in addressing youth suicide,
10 including demonstration programs;

11 (d) An assurance function providing ongoing evaluation of the
12 overall effectiveness of the youth suicide prevention program; and

13 (e) The establishment of an interagency cooperative work group,
14 appointing such participants as the secretary deems appropriate to
15 facilitate the implementation of sections 2 through 8 of this act.

16 (3) The secretary may establish demonstration youth suicide
17 prevention programs in cooperation with local school districts.

18 (4) Any local political subdivision of the state may apply to the
19 secretary for assistance or grant funds to establish a local youth
20 suicide prevention program.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The department shall adopt rules setting
22 eligibility guidelines for state funding of youth suicide prevention
23 programs under sections 2 through 8 of this act.

24 (2) The rules shall:

25 (a) Establish procedures for developing local programs, in
26 cooperation with local education agencies, youth services bureaus, and
27 community mental health centers; and

28 (b) Establish standards and policies for programs to offer:

29 (i) Individual, family, and group counseling related to youth
30 suicide prevention;

31 (ii) Referral, crisis intervention, and information for students,
32 parents, and school personnel; and

33 (iii) Training for school personnel, and others responsible for
34 counseling or supervising student activities.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) A youth suicide prevention program
36 established under sections 2 through 8 of this act shall plan, fund,

1 and implement educational programs, which may include any of the
2 following:

3 (a) Classroom instruction designed to achieve any of the following
4 objectives:

5 (i) Encourage sound choices;

6 (ii) Increase pupils' awareness of the relationship between drug
7 and alcohol use and youth suicide;

8 (iii) Teach pupils to recognize signs of suicidal tendencies, and
9 other facts about youth suicide;

10 (iv) Inform pupils of available community youth suicide prevention
11 services;

12 (v) Enhance school climate and relationships between teachers,
13 counselors, and pupils; and

14 (vi) Further cooperative efforts of school personnel and community
15 youth suicide prevention program personnel;

16 (b) School-based or community-based alternative programs outside of
17 the classroom, including:

18 (i) Positive peer group programs;

19 (ii) A twenty-four-hour hotline telephone service, staffed by
20 trained professional counselors;

21 (iii) Programs to collect data on youth suicide attempts;

22 (iv) Intervention and follow-up; and

23 (v) Parent education and training programs; and

24 (c) Teacher training programs.

25 (2) A program established under sections 2 through 8 of this act
26 shall consider:

27 (a) Assisting in increasing the awareness, among school personnel
28 and community leaders, of the incidence of teenage suicide;

29 (b) Making provisions for assessment of potential youth suicidality
30 by a mental health professional;

31 (c) Training school personnel in individual and school-wide
32 strategies for teenage suicide prevention;

33 (d) Developing and implementing school-based teenage suicide
34 prevention programs;

35 (e) Through cooperative efforts, using community resources in the
36 development and implementation of teenage suicide prevention programs
37 under sections 2 through 8 of this act; and

38 (f) Providing for the postvention and contagion reduction efforts
39 in case of suicide completion.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The department shall:

2 (1) As to each program receiving state funding:

3 (a) Monitor its operations; and

4 (b) Evaluate annually its effectiveness; and

5 (2) Review and either approve or disapprove the application for
6 state funding of a proposed program.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The department shall submit a report to the
8 legislature regarding the current status and effectiveness of the
9 programs established under sections 2 through 8 of this act.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** (1) A youth services bureau is a community-
11 based entity that operates to provide community-oriented youth suicide
12 prevention, ameliorate conditions that breed youth suicide, and
13 function as an advocate of youth needs.

14 (2)(a) The department shall adopt rules establishing eligibility
15 guidelines for state funding of youth services bureaus.

16 (b) The rules shall require that each state-aided youth services
17 bureau provide, at no cost, at convenient hours:

18 (i) Individual, family, and group counseling;

19 (ii) Referral and information services;

20 (iii) Crisis intervention, including intervention relating to youth
21 suicide prevention;

22 (iv) Informal counseling; and

23 (v) Community education, including training and information
24 relating to youth suicide prevention.

25 (3) The department shall:

26 (a) As to each youth services bureau receiving state funding:

27 (i) Monitor its operations;

28 (ii) Evaluate annually its effectiveness; and

29 (iii) Stop funding a youth services bureau that is ineffective or
30 that, for two years, fails to meet the eligibility guidelines for state
31 funding; and

32 (b) Review and either approve or disapprove the application for
33 state funding of a youth services bureau or proposed youth services
34 bureau.

35 (4)(a) The funding of an eligible youth services bureau shall be a
36 shared responsibility of the state and of local governments. The state

1 share shall be seventy-five percent of the funding of an eligible youth
2 services bureau, as provided in the omnibus appropriations act.

3 (b) Each eligible youth services bureau shall submit to the
4 department a proposed annual budget for review and approval, at the
5 times the secretary specifies.

6 (c) The proposed budget of the department shall list the eligible
7 youth services bureaus and estimate the amount of state funds to be
8 allocated to each.

9 (d) At the option of the local governmental authority that provides
10 the matching funds for an eligible youth services bureau, the state
11 funds for the support of the eligible youth services bureau shall be
12 paid directly to its private sponsor or to the local governing body.
13 Before the state funds are paid, the fiscal officer of the local
14 governmental authority shall certify, in writing, the source of the
15 twenty-five percent local funds.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** Sections 1 through 8 of this act shall
17 constitute a new chapter in Title 70 RCW.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** The sum of one million dollars, or as much
19 thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the biennium ending
20 June 30, 1995, from the general fund to the department of health for
21 the purposes of this act.

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