
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2690

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2008 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives
Cody, Hasegawa, Morrell, Green, McIntire, and Simpson)

READ FIRST TIME 02/12/08.

1 AN ACT Relating to mental health first aid; adding a new section to
2 chapter 71.24 RCW; and creating new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that a lack of
5 information about mental health problems amongst the general public
6 leads to stigmatizing attitudes and prevents people from seeking help
7 early and seeking the best sort of help. It also prevents people from
8 providing support to family members, friends, and colleagues because
9 they might not know what to do. This lack of knowledge about mental
10 health problems limits the initial accessibility of evidence-based
11 treatments and leads to a lack of support for people with a mental
12 disorder from family, friends, and other members of the community.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 71.24 RCW
14 to read as follows:

15 The department shall make available a one-time mental health train
16 the trainer first aid course that trains members of the public in how
17 to give initial help in mental health crisis situations and to support
18 people developing mental health problems. The mental health first aid

1 course will provide information about depression, anxiety disorders,
2 psychosis, and substance use disorder. Following completion of the
3 mental health first aid course, participants will know how to train
4 others to recognize the symptoms of these mental disorders; the
5 possible causes or risk factors for these disorders; the evidence-based
6 medical, psychological, and alternative treatments available; how to
7 give appropriate initial help and support to a person suffering one of
8 these disorders; and how to take appropriate action if a crisis
9 situation arises involving suicidal behavior, panic attack, stress
10 reaction to trauma, or threatening psychotic behavior. The mental
11 health first aid course shall include twelve hours of instruction and
12 shall be based on the program created by the department of psychiatry,
13 University of Melbourne in Australia.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** If specific funding for the purposes of this
15 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by
16 June 30, 2008, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and
17 void.

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