
HOUSE BILL 2690

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2008 Regular Session

By Representatives Cody, Hasegawa, Morrell, Green, McIntire, and Simpson

Read first time 01/15/08. Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

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

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 mental health first aid
16 course that trains members of the public in how to give initial help in
17 mental health crisis situations and to support people developing mental
18 health problems. The mental health first aid course will provide

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

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