

1 **ENGROSSED**

2 **H. B. 2535**

3
4 (By Delegates Longstreth, Ferro, Caputo, Rowan, O'Neal, Ashley,
5 Hamrick, L. Phillips, Fleischauer, Skinner and P. Smith)

6 [Introduced February 2, 2015; referred to the

7 Committee on Health and Human Resources then Education.]

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11 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
12 designated §18-2-40; to amend said code by adding thereto a new section, designated
13 §18B-1B-7; to amend said code by adding thereto a new article, designated §27-6-1 and
14 §27-6-2; and to amend and reenact §30-1-7a of said code, all relating generally to suicide
15 prevention training; requiring middle and high schools to provide information and
16 opportunities for discussion of suicide prevention to students; authorizing the State Board
17 of Education to consult with the Bureau for Behavioral Health to assure the quality and
18 accuracy of the information provided; providing that institutions of higher education will
19 develop and implement a policy to advise students and staff on available depression and
20 suicide prevention resources; requiring suicide prevention information to be provided to all
21 incoming students; requiring suicide prevention information to be posted on the websites of
22 institutions of higher education; requiring free prevention materials and programs to be

1 posted on the websites of all institutions of higher education, the higher education policy
 2 commission and the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities; requiring the Bureau
 3 for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities to review such posted materials annually;
 4 providing legislative findings; requiring the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health
 5 Facilities to post certain suicide prevention and awareness information on its website;
 6 providing for the Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities to assist middle and
 7 high schools in providing suicide prevention information to students; requiring certain health
 8 care professionals to obtain continuing education courses on suicide prevention and related
 9 topics as part of their license renewal; providing that certain health care professionals may
 10 only be required to complete two hours of suicide prevention training; requiring certain
 11 health care licensing boards to establish continuing education requirements and criteria and
 12 approve continuing education courses on suicide prevention and related topics.

13 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

14 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto a new
 15 section, designated §18-2-40; that said code be amended by adding thereto a new section, designated
 16 §18B-1B-7; that said code be amended by adding thereto a new article, designated §27-6-1; all to
 17 read as follows:

18 **CHAPTER 18. EDUCATION.**

19 **ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

20 **§18-2-40. Suicide prevention awareness training; dissemination of information.**

21 On or before September 1, 2015 and each year thereafter, a public middle and high school
 22 administrator shall disseminate and provide opportunities to discuss suicide prevention awareness

1 information to all middle and high school students. The information may be obtained from the
2 Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities or from a commercially developed suicide
3 prevention training program approved by the State Board of Education in consultation with the
4 bureau to assure the accuracy and appropriateness of the information.

5 **CHAPTER 18B. HIGHER EDUCATION.**

6 **ARTICLE 1B. HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION.**

7 **§18B-1B-7. Student mental health policies; suicide prevention.**

8 (a) Each public and private institution of higher education shall develop and implement a
9 policy to advise students and staff on suicide prevention programs available on and off campus that
10 includes, but is not limited to:

11 (1) Crisis intervention access, which includes information for national, state and local suicide
12 prevention hotlines;

13 (2) Mental health program access, which provides information on the availability of local
14 mental health clinics, student health services and counseling services;

15 (3) Multimedia application access, which includes crisis hotline contact information, suicide
16 warning signs, resources offered and free-of-cost applications;

17 (4) Student communication plans, which consist of creating outreach plans regarding
18 educational and outreach activities on suicide prevention; and

19 (5) Post intervention plans which include creating a strategic plan to communicate effectively
20 with students, staff and parents after the loss of a student to suicide.

21 (b) Each public and private institution of higher education shall provide all incoming students
22 with information about depression and suicide prevention resources available to students. The

1 information provided to students shall include available mental health services and other support
2 services, including student-run organizations for individuals at risk of or affected by suicide.

3 (c) The information prescribed by subsection (a), subdivisions (1) through (4) of this section
4 shall be posted on the website of each institution of higher education in this state.

5 (d) Any applicable free-of-cost prevention materials or programs shall be posted on the
6 websites of the public and private institutions of higher education, the Higher Education Policy
7 Commission, and the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education.

8 **CHAPTER 27. MENTALLY ILL PERSONS.**

9 **ARTICLE 6. SUICIDE PREVENTION AND AWARENESS.**

10 **§27-6-1. Dissemination of information.**

11 (a) The Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities shall, on or before August 1,
12 2015, post on its website suicide prevention awareness information, to include recognizing the
13 warning signs of a suicide crisis. The website shall include information related to suicide prevention
14 training opportunities offered by the bureau or an agency recognized by the bureau as a training
15 provider.

16 (b) The bureau may assist the public middle and high school administrators in providing
17 suicide prevention information to students in the public middle and high schools.

18 (c) The bureau shall annually review, for adequacy and completeness, the materials or
19 programs posted on the websites of the institutions of higher education as required by section seven,
20 article one-b, chapter eighteen-b of this code.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to expand the number of people who are trained in suicide prevention in order to maximize the possibility that at risk children and adults can be saved. School personnel from middle school through college will not only be trained, they will provide children and young adults with suicide prevention information, facilitate discussion about preventing suicide and make mental health resources available. Licensed medical professionals will be required to obtain education in suicide prevention as part of their licensing process.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.

Sections §18-2-40, §18B-1B-7 and article §27-6-1 and §27-6-2 are new; therefore, they have been completely underscored.

This bill was recommended to introduction and passage by the Joint Committee on Children and Families.