

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2018 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4172

**FISCAL
NOTE**

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HORNBUCKLE AND HAMRICK

[Introduced January 18, 2018; Referred
to the Committee on Prevention and Treatment of
Substance Abuse then Finance.]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,
2 designated §16-52-1 and §16-52-2, all relating to the establishment and implementation
3 of a crisis line and mobile application for the public to freely and anonymously access to
4 combat the crisis in this state posed by substance abuse, substance addiction, substance
5 overdose, and suicide.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 52. CRISIS LINE AND MOBILE APPLICATION ESTABLISHED.

§16-52-1. Findings and purpose.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that there exists a crisis in the State of West Virginia with regard
2 to substance abuse, substance addiction, substance overdose, and suicide. The Legislature
3 further finds that the public's ability to remotely access trained health care professionals at all
4 times through an anonymous crisis line and mobile application may counter the effects of the
5 crisis and diffuse escalating situations. The Legislature recognizes the need to provide remote,
6 anonymous services to those individuals suffering the effects of this crisis.

7 (b) It is hereby declared that the purpose of this bill is to direct the Department of Health
8 and Human Resources to establish and implement a crisis line and mobile application that will
9 provide the public with access to trained health care professionals at all times.

§16-52-2. Duties of the Department of Health and Human Resources.

1 (a) The Department of Health and Human Resources shall:

2 (1) Establish a crisis line and mobile application that the public may use to remotely and
3 anonymously access trained health care professionals by a telephone or by a wireless electronic
4 device that supports the mobile application;

5 (2) Develop and adopt guidelines for the crisis line and mobile application that shall
6 include:

7 (A) Procedures to ensure that the trained health care professionals accessed through the
8 crisis line and mobile application are able to assist the public in the areas of substance abuse,

9 substance addiction, suicide prevention, mental health counseling, or crisis intervention, based
10 on an individual's need;

11 (B) Procedures to protect the anonymity of individuals who use the crisis line or mobile
12 application, if the individuals wish to maintain their anonymity, and to secure confidential
13 information when received;

14 (C) Procedures to follow to determine when information received through the crisis line or
15 mobile application is required to be forwarded to law-enforcement officials and how to forward
16 that information;

17 (D) Procedures on how to collect statistical information and study the effectiveness of the
18 crisis line and mobile application, as provided in this article; and

19 (E) Any other guidelines deemed necessary for the establishment and implementation of
20 the crisis line and mobile application.

21 (3) Implement the crisis line and mobile application beginning January 1, 2019;

22 (4) Maintain the crisis line and mobile application at all times following their
23 implementation;

24 (5) While preserving anonymity and confidentiality, collect statistics on individuals who use
25 the crisis line and mobile application; study the effectiveness and cost of the crisis line and mobile
26 application; and prepare recommendations regarding future legislation related to the crisis line
27 and mobile application.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide for a crisis line and mobile application to combat substance-related problems and suicide in this state.

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