STATE OF NEW YORK

5500

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

April 3, 2017

Introduced by Sen. ALCANTARA -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to establishing the latina adolescent suicide prevention advisory council

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds that suicide has become the second leading cause of death for latina adolescents. Latina teens also attempt suicide at a higher rate than any other youth group.

A pervasive sadness and sense of hopelessness underlines their high rates of suicides and suicide attempts. Most of these young women are immigrants or U.S. born children of immigrants living in communities that lack the supporting mechanisms to integrate new Americans and their families into the complexities of our society.

New York State needs to do more to address this crisis as its suicide prevention funding is dismally insufficient to combat suicide across all sectors of our society. Addressing the latina adolescent suicide crisis will involve the allocation of proper state resources and the delivery of suicide prevention services by clinicians who are both culturally and linguistically competent in the delivery of health care services.

Females attempt suicide three times more often than males. As with suicide deaths, rates of attempted suicide vary considerably among demographic groups. While males are four times more likely than females to die by suicide, females attempt suicide three times as often as males.

An estimated 25.6 percent of latina teens in New York State seriously consider suicide, up from 17 percent in 2011. In New York City, Latina teens attempt suicide at more than twice the rate of white youths (13.3 percent versus 5.9 percent).

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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According to a 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, 32.6 percent of Latino teens experienced feelings of depression for two or more weeks, 14.3 percent made a plan of how they would attempt suicide within the last 12 months and 10.2 percent attempted suicide one or more times within the past 12 months.

According to researchers, disconnected relationships between mothers and daughters are a large contributing factor of latina teen suicides.

Therefore it is necessary that this legislative body establishes the latina adolescent suicide prevention advisory council.

§ 2. The mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new section 41.56 to read as follows:

§ 41.56 Latina adolescent suicide prevention advisory council.

(a) There shall be established within the office of mental health, a council on latina adolescent suicide prevention to consist of seventeen members: eight members shall be appointed by the governor with consultation by the office of mental health; three members shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly; one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the assembly; two members shall be appointed by the temporary president of the senate; two members shall be appointed by the independent democratic conference leader of the senate; and one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate.

(b) Duties of the council shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Facilitating the coordination of services and resources among agencies involved in the delivery of services for suicide prevention for latina adolescents;

(2) Monitoring the implementation of action plans developed by mental health agencies via their five year action plans and yearly funding priorities to ensure that latina adolescents at risk of suicide are being adequately incorporated and served; and

(3) Determine services, resources and policies that may further address the needs of latina adolescents at risk of suicide and provide them as per the required annual reports to the legislature and the governor.

(c) The council shall prepare and submit an annual report, the first of which shall be submitted no later than October first, two thousand eighteen, to the governor and the legislature that recommends policies, legislation, and funding needed to implement the action plans developed in response to the need to address latina adolescent suicide prevention into the state's health care delivery system.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall have become a law.