

STATE OF NEW YORK

4375

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

March 11, 2019

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, BAILEY, KENNEDY, MONTGOMERY, PERSAUD, RITCHIE, SANDERS, SEPULVEDA, STAVISKY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to requiring public and private colleges and universities to provide all incoming and current students with information about depression and suicide prevention and resources available to them on campus

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

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds and
2 declares that there is a need to address the growing number of students
3 at the collegiate level who are suffering from psychiatric stressors
4 that may lead to suicide. The legislature further recognizes that such
5 psychiatric stressors also contribute to difficulties in learning and
6 success on the collegiate level. Early detection and identification of
7 at-risk individuals may not only prevent suicide, but may also allow
8 such other students suffering from psychiatric stressors to get the
9 support needed to be successful in their academic endeavors. The support
10 necessary to achieve these goals may often require collaboration between
11 college officials and parents and/or guardians in such a manner as to be
12 consistent with the needs of each student.

13 Therefore, to achieve the above-stated goals, the legislature hereby
14 finds and declares that every college within the state shall establish a
15 suicide prevention program.

16 § 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 6438-a to
17 read as follows:

18 § 6438-a. The collegiate suicide prevention program. 1. The trustees
19 or governing board of each college shall inform incoming students about
20 suicide prevention measures through programs which may include work-
21 shops, seminars, discussion groups, and film presentations, in order to

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

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1 disseminate information about pressures and matters that may place a
2 person at risk of suicide, promote discussion, encourage reporting of
3 persons at risk of suicide, and facilitate prevention of such incidents.
4 Such information shall include, but not be limited to:

- 5 a. the mental health services available to students,
- 6 b. how to identify an at risk person,
- 7 c. the procedures in effect at the college for dealing with attempted
8 suicide,
- 9 d. the availability of counseling and other support services for
10 persons at risk and those affected by suicide,
- 11 e. the nature of and common circumstances relating to suicide on
12 college campuses, and
- 13 f. the methods the college employs to support at risk students.

14 2. Pursuant to the requirements set forth in subdivision one of this
15 section, each college shall file a report annually on its compliance of
16 such program with the commissioner.

17 3. If the trustees or other governing board of a college fails to file
18 the rules and regulations within the time required by this section such
19 college shall not be eligible to receive any state aid or assistance
20 until such rules and regulations are duly filed.

21 4. a. The president or chief administrative officer of each college,
22 except those independent colleges ineligible to receive state aid under
23 section sixty-four hundred one of this title, which maintains a campus
24 and is chartered by the regents or incorporated by special act of the
25 legislature shall appoint an advisory committee on mental health.

26 b. Such committee shall consist of a minimum of six members, one indi-
27 vidual shall be a professional in the area of mental health, at least
28 one member shall be an employee of the campus based medical facility,
29 two members of the committee shall be appointed from a list of students
30 that are participants in the student governance organization on such
31 campus, and at least two members shall be appointed from a list of
32 faculty members. All appointments shall be made by the president or
33 chief administrative officer of the college.

34 c. The committee shall review current campus mental health policies
35 and procedures and make recommendations for their improvement. It shall
36 specifically review current policies and procedures (1) for educating
37 the campus community, including mental health and medical personnel and
38 those persons who advise or supervise students, about mental health
39 issues pursuant to subdivision one of this section, (2) for educating
40 the campus community about mental health issues and suicide prevention,
41 (3) for reporting persons in crisis and dealing with persons in need,
42 (4) for referring individuals in crisis to appropriate professionals,
43 (5) for counseling individuals, and (6) for responding to inquiries from
44 concerned persons.

45 d. The committee shall report, in writing, to the college president or
46 chief administrative officer on its findings and recommendations at
47 least once each academic year, and such report shall be available upon
48 request.

49 5. Any health care professional who is employed by, or affiliated with
50 the college, and who through their employment is in a position to iden-
51 tify a student who is potentially at risk for suicide, is hereby
52 required to report such belief to the college president or chief admin-
53 istrative officer. The college president or chief administrative officer
54 of the college may, after consultation with mental health professionals,
55 notify the parents or guardians of such student as to the concern of
56 such student's mental well being.

1 § 3. This act shall take effect on the first of July next succeeding
2 the date on which it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the
3 addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary
4 for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized
5 to be made and completed on or before such effective date.