

SENATE, No. 2958

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH P. CRYAN

District 20 (Union)

Senator NELLIE POU

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Corrado, Gopal and Ruiz

SYNOPSIS

Requires institutions of higher education to implement suicide prevention programs and raise awareness of mental health services.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/9/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning suicide prevention programs at institutions of
2 higher education and amending P.L.2016, c.18.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. Section 2 of P.L.2016, c.18 (C.18A:3B-73) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 2. a. An institution of higher education shall have individuals
10 with training and experience in mental health issues who focus on
11 reducing student suicides and attempted suicides available on
12 campus or remotely by telephone or other means for students 24
13 hours a day, seven days a week. The individuals shall also work
14 with, and annually train, faculty and staff on ways to recognize the
15 signs of depression and the warning signs and risk factors
16 associated with student suicide, and on the referral of students to
17 crisis hotlines and mental health screenings.

18 b. No later than 15 days following the beginning of each
19 semester, an institution of higher education shall transmit to each
20 student via electronic mail the contact information of the
21 individuals required pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

22 c. A four-year institution of higher education shall require all
23 students who serve as resident assistants to receive annual training
24 on the signs of depression, the warning signs and risk factors
25 associated with college student suicide, the referral of students to
26 campus mental health resources, and responding to students in
27 crisis. The training shall be developed by a licensed mental health
28 professional with experience in treating depression in college
29 students.

30 d. An institution of higher education shall annually conduct a
31 mental health public awareness campaign on campus designed to:

32 (1) provide students with information on depression and suicide;

33 (2) raise awareness about the mental health services available on
34 and off campus; and

35 (3) reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health
36 services.

37 e. The governing board of an institution of higher education
38 shall establish a mental health crisis assessment and response plan.
39 The purpose of the plan shall be to act as the official protocol to be
40 used by campus staff, faculty, and resident assistants in the case of
41 four-year institutions, to identify, assess, and respond to a student
42 who is experiencing a mental health crisis. The plan shall include an
43 assessment, every five years, of elements of the campus
44 environment that might be used in a suicide attempt including, but
45 not limited to: access to building rooftops, balconies, windows, and

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 bridges; access to toxic substances including chemicals in campus
2 laboratories; and access to drugs, alcohol, controlled dangerous
3 substances, and firearms.
4 (cf: P.L.2016, c.18, s.2)
5

6 2. This act shall take effect immediately.
7
8

9 STATEMENT
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11 Under the “Madison Holleran Suicide Prevention Act,”
12 P.L.2016, c.18 (C.18A:3B-72 et seq.), institutions of higher
13 education are required to have individuals with training and
14 experience in mental health issues who focus on reducing student
15 suicides and attempted suicides available on campus or remotely by
16 telephone or other means for students 24 hours a day, seven days a
17 week. The individuals also work with faculty and staff on ways to
18 recognize the warning signs and risk factors associated with student
19 suicide. This bill amends that law to also require the individuals to
20 work with faculty and staff on recognizing the signs of depression
21 and on the referral of students to crisis hotlines and mental health
22 screenings and to provide annual training on all of these topics.

23 The bill also provides that a four-year institution of higher
24 education will require all students who serve as resident assistants
25 to receive annual training on the signs of depression, the warning
26 signs and risk factors associated with college student suicide, the
27 referral of students to campus mental health resources, and
28 responding to students in crisis.

29 This bill also requires institutions to:

- 30 • annually conduct a mental health public awareness campaign
31 on campus designed to: provide students with information on
32 depression and suicide; raise awareness about the mental
33 health services available on and off campus; and reduce the
34 stigma associated with seeking mental health services; and
- 35 • establish a mental health crisis assessment and response plan
36 to act as the official protocol to be used by campus staff,
37 faculty, and in the case of four-year institutions, resident
38 assistants, to identify, assess, and respond to a student who is
39 experiencing a mental health crisis.