

**No. 56. An act relating to public health initiatives to address death by suicide.**

(H.481)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 18 V.S.A. chapter 192 is added to read:

CHAPTER 192. PREVENTING DEATH BY SUICIDE

§ 8151. DIRECTOR OF SUICIDE PREVENTION; DUTIES

The Department of Mental Health's Director of Suicide Prevention shall lead the State's suicide prevention efforts, intervention supports, and postvention efforts and collaborate with communities and providers to reduce the number of suicide deaths and attempts in the State. The Director shall promote and support statewide crisis and suicide prevention recommendations as outlined in the State's Suicide Platform, including the creation of a strategic plan and suicide prevention education protocol for all schools. The Director shall:

- (1) expand partnerships, including with service members, veterans, and their families;
- (2) implement innovative data-driven initiatives;
- (3) coordinate suicide prevention programs across the State; and
- (4) work to secure federal funding.

Sec. 2. STATEWIDE SUICIDE PREVENTION; STRATEGIC PLAN AND  
SCHOOL PROTOCOL

(a)(1) On or before July 1, 2024, the Director of Suicide Prevention, in collaboration with the Agency of Human Services and stakeholders, shall develop and submit a statewide strategic plan pertaining to suicide prevention services, training, education, and postvention services to the House Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare. The statewide strategic plan shall identify goals, possible partners, and strategies for meeting clearly defined targets in the prevention of suicide. The plan shall consider emerging research on factors contributing to suicide. Key resources and gaps shall be identified, including sustainable 988 lifeline funding, zero suicide program expansion, improved data collection and reporting to identify contributing causes, including social factors, to inform prevention strategies, and data-informed systems and strategies for establishing and maintaining postvention services within communities, schools, afterschool programs, and health care systems.

(2) Prior to the submission of the strategic plan required pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Director of Suicide Prevention shall submit quarterly progress updates on the development of the strategic plan to the House Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare between July 1, 2023 and April 1, 2024. In the January 2024

progress update, the Director of Suicide Prevention shall include preliminary budget recommendations and a sustainable funding plan for the 988 lifeline.

(b) On or before January 15, 2024, the Director of Suicide Prevention, in collaboration with the Agency of Education and stakeholders, shall develop and submit a model protocol for all schools regarding suicide prevention, education, and postvention services to the House Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare. The model protocol shall:

(1) reflect preliminary data related to grants to expand mental health and well-being services to youth pursuant to 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 112, Sec. 3; and

(2) ensure that school employees receive education pertaining to the prevention of, use of language regarding, and identification of eating disorders in youth.

### Sec. 3. SUICIDE PREVENTION; HEALTH CARE FACILITIES; MODEL PROTOCOL

On or before July 1, 2024, the Director of Suicide Prevention, in collaboration with the Agency of Human Services, medical and professional boards, and stakeholders, shall develop and submit a model protocol to the House Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare for health care facilities regarding suicide prevention and postvention

services. This model protocol shall consider the recommendations of the report required pursuant to 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 115, Sec. 13.

Sec. 4. PRESENTATION; COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE PREVENTION  
GRANT

(a) On or before February 1, 2024, the Department of Health, in collaboration with the Director of Suicide Prevention, shall present information to the House Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare regarding the work accomplished by the State in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Comprehensive Suicide Prevention grant, including the results of the complete Suicide Data Linkage Project.

(b) Prior to the presentation required pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the Department shall submit the results of the complete Suicide Data Linkage Project to the House Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare as soon as they are available.

Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

Date Governor signed bill: June 8, 2023