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H.481

An act relating to public health initiatives to address death by suicide

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 expand partnerships, implementing innovative data-driven initiatives; coordinate suicide prevention programs across the State; and 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

1 services, training, education, and postvention services to the House Committee
2 on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare. The
3 statewide strategic plan shall identify goals, possible partners, and strategies
4 for meeting clearly defined targets in the prevention of suicide. Key resources
5 and gaps shall be identified, including sustainable 988 lifeline funding, zero
6 suicide program expansion, improved data collection and reporting to identify
7 contributing causes, including social factors, to inform prevention strategies,
8 and data-informed systems and strategies for establishing and maintaining
9 postvention services within communities, schools, and health care systems.

10 (2) Prior to the submission of the strategic plan required pursuant to
11 subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Director of Suicide Prevention shall
12 submit quarterly progress updates on the development of the strategic plan to
13 the House Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health
14 and Welfare between July 1, 2023 and April 1, 2024. In the January 2024
15 progress update, the Director of Suicide Prevention shall include preliminary
16 budget recommendations and a sustainable funding plan for the 988 lifeline.

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

1 Sec. 3. PRESENTATION; COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE PREVENTION

2 GRANT

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

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

14 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.