

## CHAPTER 401

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**HUMAN SERVICES - BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

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**SENATE BILL 24-007**

BY SENATOR(S) Fields and Michaelson Jenet, Buckner, Cutter, Exum, Ginal, Hansen, Jaquez Lewis, Kolker, Marchman, Mullica, Priola, Roberts, Sullivan, Winter F., Zenzinger, Fenberg;  
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Titone and Weinberg, Amabile, Bacon, Bird, Boesenecker, Brown, deGruy Kennedy, Duran, English, Froelich, Hamrick, Jodeh, Joseph, Kipp, Lieder, Lindsay, Lukens, Marvin, Ortiz, Parenti, Rutinel, Snyder, Valdez, Willford, Young, McCluskie.

**AN ACT**

**CONCERNING CREATING A BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

**SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(a) Mental health challenges affect all age groups, races, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic classes;

(b) The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that in 2018, Colorado had one of the 10 highest age-adjusted suicide death rates in the nation with 21.9 deaths per 100,000 Coloradans;

(c) Calls and texts to the Colorado crisis line steadily increased during the COVID-19 pandemic;

(d) As of 2021, many Coloradans, including nearly one in 5 teens or youth, live with mental health challenges;

(e) Since the Children's Hospital Colorado declared a youth mental health state of emergency in 2021, Colorado's mental health crisis among teens and youth has not improved;

(f) According to the 2022 State of Mental Health in America Report, Colorado

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*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.*

had one of the highest shares of adults with mental illness, with roughly one in 4 adults having a mental illness;

(g) Many more Coloradans are affected by the mental health challenges of someone else, such as a close friend, family member, or classmate;

(h) Mental health education increases awareness of mental health challenges, educates individuals on how to seek help, and reduces the stigma associated with mental health challenges;

(i) Mental health crisis statistics for teens and youth are alarming and constitute a call to action. According to the national statistics for teen mental health reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2021:

(I) Suicide was the third leading cause of death among teens and youth between 14 and 18 years of age;

(II) 22% of teens and youth seriously considered attempting suicide; 18% of teens and youth made a suicide plan; and 10% of teens and youth did attempt suicide; and

(III) 29% of teens and youth have experienced poor mental health.

(j) According to the Colorado Health Access Survey, the number of Colorado teens and youth 18 years of age and younger who have reported having 8 or more days of poor mental health over the past 30 days has more than doubled in 6 years; and

(k) Between 2016 and 2021, emergency room visits for mental health reasons have increased for teens and youth by 140%. Visits for self-harm have more than tripled.

(2) The general assembly finds, therefore, that it is necessary for the state to expand its efforts to improve the mental health and well-being of all Coloradans by establishing and implementing the behavioral health first aid training program. The behavioral health first aid training program is a vital initiative to address the mental and behavioral health needs of Coloradans to foster supportive environments within Colorado communities.

**SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 25-1.5-113.5 as follows:

**25-1.5-113.5. Behavioral health first aid training program - creation - appropriation - report - rules - definitions - repeal.** (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM" MEANS THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM CREATED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION.

(b) "CANDIDATE" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO ATTENDS THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM TO TEACH COURSES TO ADULTS AND TEENS. CANDIDATES MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL

STAFF; EMPLOYEES OF COMMUNITY-BASED, YOUTH-FOCUSED, OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS; EMPLOYEES OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS; FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY MEMBERS; LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS; FIRST RESPONDERS; AND ACTIVE DUTY OR RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL.

(c) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT CREATED AND EXISTING PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-1-102.

(d) "LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT, A CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT PURSUANT TO PART 1 OF ARTICLE 30.5 OF TITLE 22, A CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY THE STATE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE PURSUANT TO PART 5 OF ARTICLE 30.5 OF TITLE 22, A BOARD OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES CREATED AND OPERATING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 5 OF TITLE 22 THAT OPERATES ONE OR MORE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, OR THE COLORADO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND.

(e) "OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION" OR "OFFICE" MEANS THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE DEPARTMENT, ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-1.5-101 (1)(w).

(f) "ORGANIZATION" MEANS AN ORGANIZATION THAT APPLIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM. ORGANIZATIONS MAY INCLUDE LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS, LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS, FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, FIRST RESPONDER ORGANIZATIONS, AND MILITARY FORCES.

(g) "THIRD-PARTY ENTITY" MEANS A COLORADO-BASED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT HAS EXPERIENCE IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAMS STATEWIDE.

(2) (a) THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM IS CREATED IN THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT. THE PURPOSE OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM IS TO:

(I) IMPROVE OVERALL COMMUNITY CLIMATE AND PROMOTE ADULT, TEEN, AND YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, AND MENTAL WELL-BEING;

(II) TRAIN CANDIDATES TO RECOGNIZE THE WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE AMONG ADULTS, TEENS, AND YOUTH;

(III) TRAIN CANDIDATES ON HOW TO RESPOND TO AN ADULT, TEEN, OR YOUTH WHO IS EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES;

(IV) TRAIN CANDIDATES ON CRISIS INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES;

(V) PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH ADULTS AND TEENS HOW TO RECOGNIZE WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES;

(VI) PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH TEENS HOW TO FIND A RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTED ADULT FOR ASSISTANCE WHEN A PEER IS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES; AND

(VII) PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH ADULTS HOW TO RESPOND TO A TEEN OR YOUTH STRUGGLING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGE OR CRISIS.

(b) THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM MUST INCLUDE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED CURRICULUM TO PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH CERTIFICATION TRAINING COURSES TO:

(I) TEENS WHO ARE FIFTEEN YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER BUT UNDER NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE ON HOW TO IDENTIFY THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES, HAVE CONVERSATIONS REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES, AND SEEK THE HELP OF A RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTED ADULT;

(II) ADULTS WHO REGULARLY INTERACT WITH YOUTH WHO ARE TWELVE YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER BUT UNDER NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE ON HOW TO IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND, AND RESPOND TO SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES IN YOUTH WHO ARE TWELVE YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER BUT UNDER NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE; AND

(III) ADULTS ON HOW TO IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND, AND RESPOND TO SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES IN ADULTS.

(3) THE OFFICE SHALL CONTRACT WITH A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY TO ADMINISTER AND OFFER THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM TO ORGANIZATIONS.

(4) (a) THE OFFICE SHALL PROMULGATE RULES FOR THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM, INCLUDING CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING AN APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ORGANIZATIONS TO APPLY TO THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM.

(b) THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY SHALL CREATE AN APPLICATION PROCESS AND ESTABLISH GUIDELINES TO ADMINISTER THE APPLICATION PROCESS BASED ON THE RULES PROMULGATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (4)(a) OF THIS SECTION.

(c) IN SELECTING ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM, THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY SHALL PRIORITIZE THE ORGANIZATION'S:

(I) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY;

(II) EXISTING RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE; AND

(III) PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM AND ASSOCIATED CURRICULUM.

(d) SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS, THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY SHALL OFFER THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM AT NO COST TO SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS.

(e) THE OFFICE AND THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY MAY COLLABORATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO OFFER MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES TO LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS.

(5) (a) THE OFFICE SHALL USE PRE- AND POST-COURSE SURVEYS DEVELOPED BY A NATIONAL MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM. THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY SHALL ADMINISTER THE PRE- AND POST-COURSE SURVEYS TO COLLECT EVALUATION DATA FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM. THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE OFFICE SUMMARIZING THE EVALUATION DATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS, IF NECESSARY, TO IMPROVE THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM.

(b) THE OFFICE SHALL SUMMARIZE THE REPORT DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (5)(a) OF THIS SECTION IN THE OFFICE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-1.5-101 (1)(w)(III)(A).

(6) THE OFFICE SHALL USE AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT OF THE FUNDS APPROPRIATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (7) OF THIS SECTION FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAININGS FOCUSED ON YOUTH, TEENS, AND YOUNG ADULTS.

(7) ON JULY 1, 2024, AND EACH JULY 1 THEREAFTER, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS SECTION. THE DEPARTMENT MAY PAY COSTS RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS SECTION FROM THE APPROPRIATION MADE PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (7).

(8) THE OFFICE MAY SEEK, ACCEPT, AND EXPEND GIFTS, GRANTS, OR DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOURCES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION.

(9) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2033. BEFORE THE REPEAL, THIS SECTION IS SCHEDULED FOR REVIEW IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 24-34-104.

**SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-1.5-101, **amend** (1)(w)(III)(A) as follows:

**25-1.5-101. Powers and duties of department - laboratory cash fund - office of suicide prevention - suicide prevention coordination cash fund - dispensation of payments under contracts with grantees - report - definitions.** (1) The department has, in addition to all other powers and duties imposed upon it by law, the powers and duties provided in this section as follows:

(w) (III) (A) Notwithstanding section 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), as part of the duties of the office of suicide prevention, on or before each November 1, the office of suicide prevention shall submit to the chairs of the senate health and human services

committee and the house of representatives health, insurance, and environment committee, or their successor committees, and to the members of the joint budget committee, a report listing all crisis and suicide prevention programs in the state and describing the effectiveness of the office of suicide prevention in acting as the coordinator for crisis and suicide prevention programs. For the report submitted in 2013 and each year thereafter, the office of suicide prevention shall include any findings and recommendations it has to improve crisis and suicide prevention in the state. FOR THE REPORT SUBMITTED IN 2024 AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION SHALL INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-1.5-113.5 (5)(b).

**SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-34-104, **add** (34)(a)(XIII) as follows:

**24-34-104. General assembly review of regulatory agencies and functions for repeal, continuation, or reestablishment - legislative declaration - repeal.** (34) (a) The following agencies, functions, or both, are scheduled for repeal on September 1, 2033:

(XIII) THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM CREATED IN SECTION 25-1.5-113.5.

**SECTION 5. Appropriation.** For the 2024-25 state fiscal year, \$250,000 is appropriated to the department of public health and environment for use by the prevention services division. This appropriation is from the general fund and is based on an assumption that the division will require an additional 0.3 FTE. To implement this act, the division may use this appropriation for suicide prevention.

**SECTION 6. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state institutions.

Approved: June 5, 2024