

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 24-0139.01 Alana Rosen x2606

SENATE BILL 24-007

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Fields and Michaelson Jenet,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Titone,

Senate Committees
Health & Human Services

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING CREATING A BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING
102 PROGRAM IN THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill creates the behavioral health first aid training program (training program) in the office of suicide prevention (office) in the department of public health and environment. The purpose of the training program is to:

- Improve overall community climate and promote adult, teen, and youth behavioral health, mental health, and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

- mental well-being;
- Train educators and school staff; employees of community-based, youth-based, 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 (candidates) to recognize the warning signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance use among adults, teens, and youth;
- Train candidates on how to respond to an adult, teen, or youth who is experiencing mental health or substance use challenges;
- Train candidates on crisis intervention strategies and best practices;
- Prepare candidates to teach adults and teens how to recognize warning signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use challenges;
- 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
- Prepare candidates to teach adults how to respond to a teen or youth struggling with a mental health or substance use challenge or crisis.

The office is required to contract with a Colorado-based nonprofit organization (third-party entity) to offer and administer the training program to organizations that apply to participate and are accepted in the training program that include, but are not limited to, school districts, district charter schools, institute charter schools, boards of cooperative services, the Colorado school for the deaf and the blind, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, organizations that serve underserved communities, law enforcement agencies, first responder organizations, military forces, and faith-based organizations (organizations). Subject to available appropriations, the training program is available at no cost to the organizations selected to participate.

The bill requires the office to promulgate rules to establish criteria for an application process. The third-party entity shall create an application process based on the rules promulgated by the office.

The office shall use pre- and post-course surveys developed by a national mental and behavioral health organization to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program. The third-party entity shall administer the pre- and post-course surveys to collect evaluation data from the organizations.

The third-party entity shall submit a report to the office summarizing the evaluation data collected. The office is required to include a summary of the evaluation data collected and recommendations,

if necessary, concerning the training program in the office's annual report submitted to the general assembly each November 1.

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

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

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

6 (b) The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and
7 Prevention shows that in 2018, Colorado had one of the 10 highest
8 age-adjusted suicide death rates in the nation with 21.9 deaths per
9 100,000 Coloradans;

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

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

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

17 (f) According to the 2022 State of Mental Health in America
18 Report, Colorado had one of the highest shares of adults with mental
19 illness, with roughly one in 4 adults having a mental illness;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 **25-1.5-113.5. Behavioral health first aid training program -**

1 **creation - appropriation - report - rules - definitions.** (1) AS USED IN
2 THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

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

6 (b) "CANDIDATE" MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO ATTENDS THE
7 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM TO TEACH COURSES
8 TO ADULTS AND TEENS. CANDIDATES MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED
9 TO, EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL STAFF; EMPLOYEES OF COMMUNITY-BASED,
10 YOUTH-FOCUSED, OR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS; EMPLOYEES OF
11 ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS; FAITH-BASED
12 COMMUNITY MEMBERS; LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS; FIRST RESPONDERS;
13 AND ACTIVE DUTY OR RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL.

14 (c) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
15 AND ENVIRONMENT CREATED AND EXISTING PURSUANT TO SECTION
16 25-1-102.

17 (d) "LOCAL EDUCATION PROVIDER" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT, A
18 CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT PURSUANT TO PART
19 1 OF ARTICLE 30.5 OF TITLE 22, A CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZED BY THE
20 STATE CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE PURSUANT TO PART 5 OF ARTICLE 30.5
21 OF TITLE 22, A BOARD OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES CREATED AND
22 OPERATING PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 5 OF TITLE 22 THAT OPERATES ONE OR
23 MORE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, OR THE COLORADO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND
24 THE BLIND.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 (V) PREPARE CANDIDATES TO TEACH ADULTS AND TEENS HOW TO

1 RECOGNIZE WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND
2 SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES;

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 (3) THE OFFICE SHALL CONTRACT WITH A THIRD-PARTY ENTITY TO

1 ADMINISTER AND OFFER THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING
2 PROGRAM TO ORGANIZATIONS.

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

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

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

14 (I) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY;

15 (II) EXISTING RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE; AND

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

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

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

24 (5) (a) THE OFFICE SHALL USE PRE- AND POST-COURSE SURVEYS
25 DEVELOPED BY A NATIONAL MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
26 ORGANIZATION TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BEHAVIORAL
27 HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM. THE THIRD-PARTY ENTITY SHALL

1 ADMINISTER THE PRE- AND POST-COURSE SURVEYS TO COLLECT
2 EVALUATION DATA FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE
3 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM. THE THIRD-PARTY
4 ENTITY SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE OFFICE SUMMARIZING THE
5 EVALUATION DATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS, IF NECESSARY, TO IMPROVE
6 THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING PROGRAM.

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

11 (6) THE OFFICE SHALL USE AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT OF THE FUNDS
12 APPROPRIATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (7) OF THIS SECTION FOR
13 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAININGS FOCUSED ON TEENS WHO ARE
14 FIFTEEN YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER BUT UNDER NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE
15 AND ADULTS WHO WORK WITH YOUTH WHO ARE TWELVE YEARS OF AGE OR
16 OLDER BUT UNDER NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE.

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

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

25 **25-1.5-101. Powers and duties of department - laboratory cash**
26 **fund - office of suicide prevention - suicide prevention coordination**
27 **cash fund - dispensation of payments under contracts with grantees**

1 **- report - definitions.** (1) The department has, in addition to all other
2 powers and duties imposed upon it by law, the powers and duties
3 provided in this section as follows:

4 (w) (III) (A) Notwithstanding section 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), as part
5 of the duties of the office of suicide prevention, on or before each
6 November 1, the office of suicide prevention shall submit to the chairs of
7 the senate health and human services committee and the house of
8 representatives health, insurance, and environment committee, or their
9 successor committees, and to the members of the joint budget committee,
10 a report listing all crisis and suicide prevention programs in the state and
11 describing the effectiveness of the office of suicide prevention in acting
12 as the coordinator for crisis and suicide prevention programs. For the
13 report submitted in 2013 and each year thereafter, the office of suicide
14 prevention shall include any findings and recommendations it has to
15 improve crisis and suicide prevention in the state. FOR THE REPORT
16 SUBMITTED IN 2024 AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE OFFICE OF SUICIDE
17 PREVENTION SHALL INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT PURSUANT TO
18 SECTION 25-1.5-113.5 (5)(b).

19 **SECTION 4. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,
20 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
21 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for
22 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state
23 institutions.