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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Papen ORIGINAL DATE 1/31/18
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Mental Health and Suicide Info to Students SB 168

ANALYST Chilton

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY18	FY19		
	\$10.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Senate Bill 172.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 168 would require that all New Mexico public institutes of higher learning provide information to their students regarding mental health and suicide prevention services and common warning signs of being at risk of suicide. The bill requires that the material be available in printed form, but notes that the addition of other formats, as live presentations or in digital form, may also be appropriate.

Senate Bill 168, Mental Health and Suicide Info to Students, appropriates \$10,000 from the General Fund to the Higher Education Department for the purpose of funding the compilation of information that would be given to students in New Mexico public institutions of post-secondary education.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HED would be asked to develop materials that could be disseminated to students at New Mexico institutions, and would be given a \$10,000 appropriation to do so. HED does not indicate a need for additional personnel to accomplish Senate Bill 168's mandates. However, HED states that

“This request includes new functions or assignments to the HED. This will require additional study, review and resource assessment to ascertain the total financial impact of this request. The preliminary review indicates an increase in administrative costs to HED. This request does not include any additional appropriation to help cover the increased costs. Moreover, there would likely be both up-front and recurring costs that would be required for successful deployment of the project... The Boards of Regents of each public institution of higher education would need to seek other sources of funding such as federal or private grants or determine if the institution has existing funds available to help support this initiative.

Unexpended funds would revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

New Mexico, like other Mountain States, has long had a suicide rate higher than most of the rest of the United States. It is thought that the higher rates in the Mountain States may be due to the more ready availability of firearms, which are implicated in 53% of suicides nationwide. According to the National Violent Death Reporting System, in 2012, the overall age-adjusted suicide rate in the United States was 12.6 per 100,000 population. Among states, Wyoming had the highest suicide rate (29.6), followed by Alaska (23.0), Montana (22.6), **New Mexico (21.3)**, and Utah (21.0), and in 2016, New Mexico’s rate had edged up to 22.5/100,000. (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/suicide-mortality/suicide.htm>).

As noted by HED,

According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, which is a part of the non-profit organization Education Development Center, suicide and suicidal behaviors are a major concern for colleges and universities. Suicide is a leading cause of death among college and university students in the United States. In addition to the students who die by suicide, many others struggle with suicidal thoughts and other mental health problems. Fortunately, colleges and universities also provide unique opportunities for comprehensive suicide prevention planning.

According to the American Psychological Association, since the 1990s, university and college counseling centers have been experiencing a shift in the needs of students seeking counseling services from developmental and informational needs to those involving psychological problems. In the 2014 National Survey of College Counseling Centers, respondents reported that 52 percent of their clients had severe psychological problems, an increase from 44 percent in 2013. A majority of respondents noted increases over the past 5 years of anxiety disorders, crises requiring immediate response, psychiatric medication issues and clinical depression. In a 2016 survey of students by the American College Health Association, 52.7 percent of students surveyed reported feeling that things were hopeless and 39.1 percent reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function during the past 12 months.

References:

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (<https://www.sprc.org/settings/colleges-universities>)
- American Psychological Association (<http://www.apa.org/advocacy/higher-education/mental-health/index.aspx>)

The Centers for Disease Control have published an extensive resource on suicide prevention, available on line at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicideTechnicalPackage.pdf>.

RELATIONSHIP

Relates to Senate Bill 172, which specifies that the Public Education Department require that elementary, middle, and high schools educate personnel on suicide prevention and referral of school children having worrisome signs. In contrast, Senate Bill 168 would provide education to students rather than to post-secondary school and college personnel.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The extent and content of information regarding mental health issues and suicide provided to post-secondary students would vary among the state's higher education institutions.

LAC/sb/jle