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**SENATE BILL NO. 623**

Offered January 20, 2012

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 23-9.2:8 of the Code of Virginia, relating to mental health treatment coordination for students in higher education.*

Patrons—Petersen; Delegate: Scott, J.M.

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 23-9.2:8 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 23-9.2:8. Students' mental health policies.

A. The governing ~~boards~~board of each public institution of higher education shall develop and implement policies that advise students, faculty, and staff, including residence hall staff, of the proper procedures for identifying and addressing the needs of students exhibiting suicidal tendencies or behavior. The policies shall ensure that no student is penalized or expelled solely for attempting to commit suicide, or seeking mental health treatment for suicidal thoughts or behaviors. Nothing in this section shall preclude any public institution of higher education from establishing policies and procedures for appropriately dealing with students who are a danger to themselves, or to others, and whose behavior is disruptive to the academic community.

B. The governing board of each public institution of higher education shall establish a written memorandum of understanding with their local community services board or behavioral health authority, and with local hospitals and other local mental health facilities in order to coordinate the care of current students. Each institution of higher education shall designate a contact person to be notified when a student is involuntarily committed, or when a student is discharged from a facility and he consents to such notification. Each memorandum shall include the inclusion of the institution of higher education in the post-discharge planning of a student who has been committed, to the extent allowable under state and federal privacy laws.

INTRODUCED

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