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**HOUSE BILL NO. 206**

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled December 26, 2013

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 23-9.2:8 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 1 of Title 23 a section numbered 23-9.2:13, relating to four-year public institutions of higher education; mental health resources, online module, and online assessment.*

Patrons—Hope, Yost and Filler-Corn; Senator: Ebbin

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

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

**1. That § 23-9.2:8 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 1 of Title 23 a section numbered 23-9.2:13 as follows:**

**§ 23-9.2:8. Student mental health policies.**

A. The governing 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 (i) *symptoms of depression, anxiety, or self-destructive behavior* or (ii) suicidal tendencies or behavior, and provide for training, where appropriate.

B. The governing board of each public four-year institution of higher education shall establish a written memorandum of understanding with its local community services board or behavioral health authority and with local hospitals and other local mental health facilities in order to expand the scope of services available to students seeking treatment. The memorandum shall designate a contact person to be notified when a student is involuntarily committed, or when a student is discharged from a facility and consents to such notification. The memorandum shall also provide for the inclusion of the institution in the post-discharge planning of a student who has been committed and intends to return to campus, to the extent allowable under state and federal privacy laws.

**§ 23-9.2:13. Four-year public institutions; mental health resources, online module, and online assessment.**

A. Each four-year public institution of higher education shall create and feature on its website a page with information dedicated solely to the mental health resources available to students at the institution.

B. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (Department), in conjunction with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (Council), shall create a website that directs students from each four-year public institution of higher education to each institution's mental health resources page created pursuant to subsection A.

C. The Department, in conjunction with the Council, shall create an online interactive module on mental health with content that includes (i) the major signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, self-destructive behavior, and suicidal tendencies and behavior; (ii) methods for providing assistance to fellow students exhibiting the above-mentioned signs or symptoms; and (iii) the mental health resources available to students at each institution. The Department, in conjunction with the Council, shall create a criterion-referenced online assessment to test each student's comprehension of the content of the online interactive module.

D. Each four-year public institution of higher education shall require incoming students to participate in the online interactive module on mental health and the online assessment created by the Department and the Council and receive a passing grade of 80 percent on the online assessment. At the start of each student's first semester, residence hall staff, if applicable, shall review the content of the online interactive module with their housing residents.

**2. That the provisions of this act shall become effective on July 1, 2015.**

INTRODUCED

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