VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2017 SESSION

CHAPTER 691

An Act to amend and reenact § 23.1-802 of the Code of Virginia, relating to baccalaureate public institutions of higher education; student mental health; postvention services after a student suicide.

[S 1430]

Approved March 24, 2017

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 23.1-802 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 23.1-802. Student mental health; policies; website resource.

A. The governing board of each public institution of higher education shall develop and implement policies that (i) 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 and (ii) provide for training where appropriate. Such policies shall require procedures for notifying the institution's student health or counseling center for the purposes set forth in subdivision B 4 of § 23.1-1303 when a student exhibits suicidal tendencies or behavior.

B. The board of visitors of each baccalaureate public institution of higher education shall develop and implement policies that ensure that after a student suicide, affected students have access to reasonable medical and behavioral health services, including postvention services. For the purposes of this subsection, "postvention services" means services designed to facilitate the grieving or adjustment process, stabilize the environment, reduce the risk of negative behaviors, and prevent suicide contagion.

~~B.~~ *C.* The board of visitors of each baccalaureate public 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, to the extent allowable under state and federal privacy laws, when a student is involuntarily committed, or when a student is discharged from a facility. The memorandum shall 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.

~~C.~~ *D.* Each baccalaureate 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.