

FLOOR ALERT

AB 89 (Levine): Psychologists: Suicide Prevention Training

Suicide is a Critical Public Health Issue

Suicide is a critical public health issue in the State of California, where on average, one person dies of suicide every two hours and twice as many people die of suicide than by homicide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) data shows that suicide is the third leading cause of death for Californian's ages 15 - 34, and the tenth leading cause of death for all Californians between the years of 2000-2015. Furthermore, CDC data also shows that the overall suicide rate in California has increased by 21.4 percent during the years 2000-2015.

Addressing the Issue

The Board of Psychology (Board) reviewed survey data of training programs and graduate programs, other studies, research, input from the field, and public comment at Board and committee meetings; wherein the Board learned that there was a significant variance in the amount of training received in suicide prevention prior to licensure. Based on this input, the Board decided to take action by requiring all licensed psychologists meet a one-time requirement of six hours of suicide assessment and intervention training/coursework.

What this means for applicants for licensure is during the application process, they would provide proof of completion of coursework during their qualifying degree program, training during their supervised professional experience, or proof of completion of continuing education coursework. For current licensees, upon renewal, individuals would verify by checking a box that they had fulfilled the six-hour requirement. Upon audit (the Board typically audits 5-10% of the total licensees renewed each month), licensees would provide proof of completion of six hours of coursework during their qualifying degree program, training during their supervised professional experience, or proof of completion of continuing education courses.

A Fair and Balanced Approach

This bill aims to ensure that all psychologists receive education and training to meet a minimal level of knowledge in the assessment and treatment of this important public health issue. For those that have received the training/education, there is a mechanism in place to verify completion. This bill is not an additional mandate for those that have already received the training and is therefore a fair and balanced approach to addressing this issue.

The Board of Psychology asks for your help to **ensure that all licensed psychologists receive suicide assessment and intervention training by voting "AYE" on AB 89** when it comes to the Assembly Floor. In the absence of such a measure, some psychologists are not likely to be prepared to address this critical life threatening issue.

The Board of Psychology's mission is to advance quality psychological services for Californians by ensuring ethical and legal practice and supporting the evolution of the profession.

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