

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1624
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Higher Education
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The committee substitute to S.B. 1624 ensures students at Texas universities are given valuable suicide prevention information.

According to the Texas Suicide Prevention Council, suicide is the second leading cause of death in Texas among older teens, college age youth, and young adults ages 15 to 34. Nationwide, nearly one-third of college students report experiencing depression that impacts their ability to function some time during the year, according to the National Institutes of Health.

S.B. 1624 requires that a general academic teaching institution (i.e., only the four-year universities) provide to each entering full-time undergraduate, graduate, or professional student (including transfer students) information about available mental health and suicide prevention services offered by the institution or associated organizations; and early warning signs that are present in, and appropriate intervention for, a person considering suicide.

Under the bill, information cannot be provided only in paper format, but may be provided through a live presentation or an online program or video that lasts not more than 15 minutes.

S.B. 1624 amends current law relating to a requirement that certain entering students at a general academic teaching institution receive information regarding mental health and suicide prevention services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.9194, as follows:

Sec. 51.9194. **REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR ENTERING STUDENTS REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION SERVICES.** (a) Requires a general academic teaching institution to provide to each entering full-time undergraduate, graduate, or professional student, including each full-time undergraduate, graduate, or professional student who transfers to the institution, information about:

(1) available mental health and suicide prevention services offered by the institution or by any associated organizations or programs; and

(2) early warning signs that are often present in and appropriate intervention for a person who may be considering suicide.

(b) Provides that the information required under this section:

(1) may be provided through a live presentation or a format that allows for student interaction, such as an online program or video; and

(2) may not be provided in a paper format only.

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 51.9194, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies to full-time entering students who are admitted to an undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree program at a general academic teaching institution beginning with the 2016 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.