

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION DECLARING MENTAL HEALTH
ISSUES TO BE A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AT UTAH
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

2017 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Edward H. Redd

Senate Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor declares mental health issues to be a public health crisis at Utah higher education institutions and strongly urges Utah's government and community groups to seek productive, long-term solutions to address the crisis.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- declares mental health issues to be a public health crisis at Utah higher education institutions;
- recognizes Utah's high rate of suicide and attempted suicide due to mental health issues; and
- strongly urges state agencies, local health authorities, non-profit groups, and higher education entities to seek productive, long-term solutions to address this crisis.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, mental health issues at Utah higher education institutions constitute a



public health crisis;

WHEREAS, Utah ranks in the top 10 for most suicides in the nation;

WHEREAS, Utah ranks fifth in the nation for most youth suicides;

WHEREAS, over 100 students enrolled in Utah higher education institutions attempted suicide during the 2015 academic year;

WHEREAS, 15 of those higher education students who attempted suicide were tragically successful;

WHEREAS, many students who need mental health services are unable to access treatment from university-sponsored mental health services due to wait lists that can be as long as four to six weeks;

WHEREAS, the International Association of Counseling Services' (IACS) national recommendation is one full-time counselor per 1,000-1,500 students at institutions of higher education;

WHEREAS, Utah State University, the University of Utah, Utah Valley University, Weber State University, and Dixie State University do not meet IACS national recommendations;

WHEREAS, communities where state-run universities, colleges, and technical colleges are located may have mental health treatment and crisis intervention resources that are not readily available to students on campuses; and

WHEREAS, partnerships and collaboration between university-sponsored mental health services and community mental health treatment and crisis intervention resources may result in improved access to crisis and treatment interventions for students on campuses as well as the general public and result in a decrease in suicide attempts and improved mental health outcomes on campuses and in the community:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein, declares mental health issues to be a public health crisis at Utah higher education institutions and strongly urges the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Public Safety, local health departments, local mental health authorities and providers, the Utah chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Utah chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the Utah Board of Regents, and public institutions of higher education, including universities, colleges, and technical colleges

59 to:

60 (1) form local coalitions and work collaboratively on a local, community, and
61 statewide basis to identify, promote, and share available higher education mental health
62 services and local community mental health resources, including crisis prevention and
63 interventions;

64 (2) identify successes from collaborative efforts as well as ongoing deficiencies in
65 mental health treatment and crisis prevention and interventions at institutions of higher
66 education that cannot be adequately addressed through appropriate partnerships and sharing of
67 community and higher education mental health resources; and

68 (3) provide a report, including specific findings of collaborative successes and ongoing
69 mental health services deficiencies, and make recommendations for possible solutions to the
70 Health and Human Services Interim Committee, the Higher Education Appropriations
71 Subcommittee, and the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee by October 31, 2017.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Utah's
73 Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Department of Public Safety; all
74 county and local mental health authorities; the Utah National Alliance on Mental Illness; the
75 Utah Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; the Utah Board of Regents;
76 and each of the presidents of Utah's eight public higher education institutions.

Legislative Review Note
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel