

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
90th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2015

As Engrossed: H3/17/15
A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1887

By: Representatives Lemons, Baltz, Bentley, Bragg, Copeland, Cozart, Davis, D. Ferguson, C. Fite, L. Fite, Gates, Gossage, M. Gray, Hammer, Harris, Henderson, Jean, Jett, Johnson, Love, Lowery, Magie, Richey, Richmond, Rushing, Shepherd, B. Smith, Sorvillo, Speaks, Sturch, Tosh, Vines
By: Senator E. Williams

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING SUICIDE
PREVENTION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING SUICIDE
PREVENTION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 20, Chapter 45, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 3 -- Arkansas Suicide Prevention Council

20-45-301. Findings and intent.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Five hundred sixteen (516) Arkansans died by suicide in 2013, making suicide the leading cause of injury death in Arkansas and that suicide is an urgent and serious public health and welfare problem in the state;

(2) Arkansas needs a comprehensive and coordinated approach to prevent suicide across all age and demographic groups in all areas of the state and to ensure that suicide prevention becomes a shared priority for all citizens;



(3) Statewide coordination of suicide prevention efforts is necessary to ensure high levels of collaborative leadership, effectiveness, and continuous improvement;

(4) An effective, evidence-based strategy is necessary to increase knowledge about and access to suicide prevention, intervention, and postintervention resources for all Arkansans;

(5) Intentional leadership, survivor input, and capacity-building, policy development, and alignment of services for high-risk sectors are needed;

(6) A seamless system of support and follow-up coordination for suicide attempt survivors and situationally high-risk individuals is needed;

(7) The rate of suicide in Arkansas is presently out-pacing the nation and increasing year to year; and

(8) The absence of a suicide prevention program authority in Arkansas is a major threat to public health and welfare.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Injury Prevention Division of the Department of Health be designated the program authority to receive and solicit funding as appropriate to provide adequate funding in support of an effective and staffed statewide suicide prevention program.

20-45-302. Creation and purpose.

(a) There is established the "Arkansas Suicide Prevention Council".

(b) The purpose of the council is to serve as a central body on suicide prevention efforts across the state, including without limitation:

(1) Setting priorities for statewide, data-driven, evidence-based, and clinically-informed suicide prevention in Arkansas;

(2) Providing a public forum to examine the current status of suicide prevention and intervention policies, priorities, and practices;

(3) Identifying interested parties, community, state, and national prevention providers and stakeholders for collaboration and devising a system of gathering data and other information to ensure coordination of suicide prevention resources and services throughout Arkansas;

(4) Assisting private, nonprofit, and faith-based entities, including without limitation coalitions, foundations, initiatives, churches, veterans groups, substance abuse recovery groups, senior adult organizations,

grief support groups, injury prevention groups, and other groups to enhance suicide prevention and survivor support efforts; and

(5) Aiding in the development of evaluation tools and data collection for use in reporting suicide prevention efforts to the public.

(c) Within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this act, there shall be appointed to the council no more than twenty-three (23) members, including:

(1) A representative of the Office of the Attorney General, to be designated by the Attorney General;

(2) A representative of the Division of Behavioral Health Services of the Department of Health, to be designated by the head of the Division of Behavioral Health Services;

(3) A representative of the Department of Education, to be designated by the Director of the Department of Education;

(4) A representative of the Division of Youth Services of the Department of Health, to be designated by the head of the Division of Youth Services;

(5) A representative of Arkansas Children's Hospital, to be designated by the Director of Arkansas Children's Hospital;

(6) A representative of law enforcement, to be designated by Director of the Department of Arkansas State Police;

(7) A representative from higher education, to be designated by the Director of the Department of Higher Education;

(8) A representative from kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) education, to be designated by the Arkansas Education Association;

(9) A representative from an employee assistance program or human resources in the private sector, to be designated by the Governor;

(10) A licensed mental health professional, to be designated by the Governor;

(11) A representative of substance-abuse treatment providers, to be designated by the Governor;

(12) A representative of primary medical care providers, to be designated by the Governor;

(13) A representative of first responders, to be designated by the Governor;

(14) A representative from a hospital with an on-site emergency

department, to be designated by the Governor;

(15) A hospital-based social worker, to be designated by the Governor;

(16) An elected coroner, to be designated by the Governor;

(17) An active member or veteran of any branch of the United States military, to be designated by the Governor;

(18) A family member of a person who died by suicide, to be designated by the Governor;

(19) A person who has attempted suicide, recovered, and is now thriving, to be designated by the Governor;

(20) A representative of the suicide prevention nonprofit community, to be designated by the Governor;

(21) A representative of the Arkansas Prevention Network, to be designated by the Director of the Arkansas Prevention Network;

(22) A representative from an interfaith organization, to be designated by the Governor; and

(23) The Chair of the Arkansas Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force, or his or her designee.

(d) The council shall elect annually two (2) cochairs, a vice chair, and a secretary who will serve as an executive board.

(e)(1) The council shall establish a charter and bylaws within ninety (90) days of the first meeting.

(2) A quorum for conducting business is one-half (1/2) of the appointed members.

(f)(1) The council shall meet at least four (4) times each year.

(2) The council shall meet at times and places that the co-chairs deem necessary, but no meeting shall be held outside the state.

(3) Special meetings may be held at the call of the co-chairs, as needed.

(g)(1) The appointed members of the council shall serve staggered terms of four (4) years with no more than two (2) contiguous terms.

(2) If a vacancy occurs in an appointed position, the vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by an appointment made in the same manner as the original appointment.

(h) Appointments shall:

(1) Represent persons of different ethnic backgrounds;

(2) Include members from each of Arkansas's four (4) congressional districts; and

(3) Include members with expertise from groups associated with high suicide rates and suicide attempts.

(i)(1) The members of the council shall serve without compensation but may seek reimbursement for travel expenses to and from meetings of the council.

(2) The expense reimbursement shall be paid by the Department of Health from moneys available for that purpose.

(j) The Department of Health shall provide staff and programmatic support for the council to the extent that funding is available.

(k) The Department of Health is the designated agency for the purposes of suicide prevention and related state and federal programmatic and funding applications.

(l) Within the first year of its creation, the council shall make recommendations to the General Assembly on staffing and funding needs to implement an effective statewide suicide prevention program.

/s/Lemons