

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2198

Introduced by Assembly Member Levine
(Principal coauthor: Senator Hill)

February 20, 2014

An act to add Chapter 17 (commencing with Section 4999.150) to Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, relating to healing arts.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2198, as introduced, Levine. Mental health professionals: suicide prevention training.

Existing law provides for the licensure and regulation of various professionals who provide mental health-related services, including psychologists, marriage and family therapists, educational psychologists, and clinical social workers. Under existing law, an applicant for licensure in these professions is required to complete certain coursework or training in order to be eligible for a license. Existing law also requires these professionals to participate in continuing education as a prerequisite for renewing their license.

This bill would require a mental health professional, defined to include, but not be limited to, certain types of professionals, to complete a training program in suicide assessment, treatment, and management that is administered by the relevant board or other state entity responsible for the licensure and regulation of the mental health professional. The bill would require the Department of Consumer Affairs to conduct a study evaluating the effect of evidence-based suicide assessment, treatment, and management training on the ability of licensed health care professionals to identify, refer, treat, and manage patients with

suicidal ideation, and would require the department, no later than January 1, 2016, to prepare and submit to the Legislature report summarizing the findings of that study.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 17 (commencing with Section 4999.150)
2 is added to Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, to
3 read:

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5 CHAPTER 17. MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SUICIDE
6 PREVENTION TRAINING
7

8 4999.150. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
9 following:

10 (a) According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and
11 Prevention:

12 (1) In 2008, more than 36,000 people died by suicide in the
13 United States, making it the 10th leading cause of death nationally.

14 (2) During 2007 to 2008, inclusive, an estimated 569,000 people
15 visited hospital emergency departments with self-inflicted injuries
16 in the United States, 70 percent of whom had attempted suicide.

17 (b) According to a national study, veterans face an elevated risk
18 of suicide as compared to the general population, more than twice
19 the risk among male veterans. Another study has indicated a
20 positive correlation between posttraumatic stress disorder and
21 suicide.

22 (c) Research continues on how the effects of wartime service
23 and injuries such as traumatic brain injury, posttraumatic stress
24 disorder, or other service-related conditions, may increase the
25 number of veterans who attempt suicide.

26 (d) As more men and women separate from the military and
27 transition back into civilian life, community mental health
28 providers will become a vital resource to help these veterans and
29 their families deal with issues that may arise.

30 (e) Suicide has an enormous impact on the family and friends
31 of the victim as well as the community as a whole.

1 (f) Approximately 90 percent of people who die by suicide had
2 a diagnosable psychiatric disorder at the time of death. Most suicide
3 victims exhibit warning signs or behaviors prior to an attempt.

4 (g) Improved training and education in suicide assessment,
5 treatment, and management has been recommended by a variety
6 of organizations, including the United States Department of Health
7 and Human Services and the Institute of Medicine.

8 (h) It is the intent of the Legislature to help lower the suicide
9 rate in this state by requiring certain health professionals to
10 complete training in suicide assessment, treatment, and
11 management as part of their continuing education, continuing
12 competency, or recertification requirements.

13 (i) The Legislature does not intend to expand or limit the existing
14 scope of practice of any health professional affected by this chapter.
15 4999.151. As used in this chapter, “mental health professional”
16 includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

17 (a) A psychologist.

18 (b) A marriage and family therapist.

19 (c) A clinical social worker.

20 4999.152. Commencing January 1, 2015, a mental health
21 professional subject to this chapter shall complete a training
22 program in suicide assessment, treatment, and management as
23 prescribed by this chapter and administered by the relevant board
24 or other state entity responsible for the licensure and regulation of
25 the mental health professional.

26 4999.153. (a) The Department of Consumer Affairs shall
27 conduct a study evaluating the effect of evidence-based suicide
28 assessment, treatment, and management training on the ability of
29 licensed health care professionals to identify, refer, treat, and
30 manage patients with suicidal ideation.

31 (b) The Department of Consumer Affairs shall prepare and
32 submit to the Legislature, no later than January 1, 2016, a report
33 summarizing the findings of the study pursuant to subdivision (a).
34 The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of
35 the Government Code.

36 (c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2019,
37 and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that
38 is enacted before January 1, 2019, deletes or extends that date.

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