

A RESOLUTION encouraging suicide prevention training for healthcare professionals in Kentucky.

WHEREAS, suicide is the second leading cause of death in Kentucky among young people ages 15 to 34 and the fourth leading cause of death in Kentucky among people ages 35 to 54, and the rate of suicide for older adults in the Commonwealth is disproportionately high compared with younger age groups and is higher than the national average; and

WHEREAS, in the past decade, an average of 600 Kentuckians have died by suicide each year and an estimated 3,000 Kentuckians attempt suicide annually. In the state, people dying by suicide each year outnumber homicide deaths three to one; and

WHEREAS, as many as one-third of the citizens of the Commonwealth suffer devastating and long-lasting emotional trauma when a family member, friend, coworker, neighbor, or classmate dies as a result of suicide; and

WHEREAS, suicide is a major public health issue that can be reduced when initiatives dedicated to the prevention of suicide, the promotion of effective treatment for persons at risk, and the support of persons who have lost a loved one to suicide are encouraged; and

WHEREAS, suicide is often the result of untreated mental illness, especially depressive disorders, and research indicates that many suicides would have been prevented with immediate and appropriate intervention and treatment. Research also demonstrates that increased public awareness of the warning signs of suicide and awareness of appropriate and effective intervention strategies reduce suicide deaths; and

WHEREAS, over 200 volunteers across the state have been trained as suicide prevention gatekeeper trainers to teach family, friends, and all citizens in the Commonwealth how to help save the life of someone in a mental health crisis; and

WHEREAS, Louisville is the first major city in the United States to establish and implement a community-wide suicide prevention plan as part of the Metro Louisville

Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Blueprint; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, Kentucky joined Washington state to become the second state to pass a law requiring training in suicide assessment, treatment, and management for mental health professionals. In March of 2014, Washington expanded its law to require the training of healthcare professionals; and

WHEREAS, every year in Kentucky, it is estimated that over 2,000 individuals who attempted suicide are treated in emergency rooms or admitted to hospitals for treatment. Healthcare settings like this represent a critical juncture in which persons with suicidal thoughts or ideation could be cared for by professionals with training specifically regarding suicide prevention; and

WHEREAS, suicide prevention opportunities continue to increase due to advances in clinical research pertaining to the diagnosis and effective treatment of mental illness, advances in neuroscience, and in the development of community-based suicide prevention initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the training of healthcare professionals in suicide assessment, treatment, and management would be effective, valuable, and life-saving for the citizens of the Commonwealth;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The House of Representatives recognizes and encourages initiatives dedicated to preventing suicide, helping people at risk for suicide and people who have attempted suicide, promoting safe and effective treatment for persons at risk, and supporting people who have lost someone to suicide, and encourages cities across the Commonwealth to join Louisville in establishing community-wide suicide prevention plans.

➔Section 2. The House of Representatives encourages suicide prevention training

for all healthcare professionals throughout the Commonwealth, recognizing the integral role they play in caring for the citizens of Kentucky.

➔Section 3. The Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Stephen Ulrich, chairperson of the Nathan Alan Eisert Foundation Suicide Prevention Day on the Hill and board member of the Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group, 10515 Leven Boulevard, Louisville, Kentucky 40229.