

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Mental Health Early Action on Campus Act.

6 Section 5. Intent. This Act is intended to address gaps in
7 mental health services on college campuses across Illinois,
8 including both 2-year and 4-year institutions, through
9 training, peer support, and community-campus partnerships.

10 Section 10. Findings. The General Assembly finds all of the
11 following:

12 (1) Mental health is a pressing and growing issue on
13 college campuses across this State and the country. A
14 recent national survey found that one in 4 college students
15 are treated for or diagnosed with a mental health condition
16 and one in 5 has considered suicide.

17 (2) About 75% of all mental health conditions start by
18 age 24, with higher rates of diagnosed disorders in
19 college-aged students. College counseling center directors
20 believe mental health conditions among students on their
21 campuses are increasing, signaling a growing issue that
22 must be addressed.

1 (3) Students who come from low-income households are
2 more likely to have a mental health condition.

3 (4) Between 2007 and 2017, the diagnosis rate of
4 college students increased from 22% to 36%, indicating a
5 higher need for services. Treatment rates over the same
6 period increased by 15%.

7 (5) Young adults are less likely to receive mental
8 health support than any other age group. College campuses
9 can play a big role in addressing this challenge. Over 70%
10 of Illinois high school graduates enroll in a postsecondary
11 program shortly after graduation.

12 (6) College-aged students are more accepting of mental
13 health services than the general population, but most
14 struggle accessing them. An overwhelming 96% of college
15 students reported they would provide support to peers whom
16 they knew were thinking about suicide.

17 (7) Many students lack knowledge of mental health signs
18 and symptoms and do not know how to help or where to refer
19 their friends for services.

20 (8) Services offered by most college campuses are
21 limited in scope and capacity, with 67% of campus
22 counseling center directors saying that their campus
23 psychiatric service capacity is inadequate or does not meet
24 student demand.

25 (9) Combined with a dearth of available services, the
26 vast majority of students do not seek out services, and

1 many students who complete a suicide never received
2 on-campus services. Paying for community-based services is
3 an issue for about half of students. Combining insufficient
4 on-campus services with unaffordable community resources
5 leaves students on their own.

6 Section 15. Purpose. The purpose of this Act is to
7 accomplish all of the following:

8 (1) Further identify students with mental health needs
9 and connect them to services.

10 (2) Increase access to support services on college
11 campuses.

12 (3) Increase access to clinical mental health services
13 on college campuses and in the surrounding communities for
14 college students.

15 (4) Empower students through peer-to-peer support and
16 training on identifying mental health needs and resources.

17 (5) Reduce administrative policies that put an undue
18 burden on students seeking leave for their mental health
19 conditions through technical assistance and training.

20 Section 20. Definitions. As used in this Act:

21 "Advisor" means a staff member who provides academic,
22 professional, and personal support to students.

23 "Campus security" means a law enforcement officer who has
24 completed his or her probationary period and is employed as a

1 security officer or campus police officer by a public college
2 or university.

3 "Linkage agreement" means a formal agreement between a
4 public college or university and an off-campus mental health
5 provider or agency.

6 "Mental health condition" means a symptom consistent with a
7 mental illness, as defined under Section 1-129 of the Mental
8 Health and Developmental Disabilities Code, or a diagnosed
9 mental illness.

10 "Public college or university" means any public community
11 college subject to the Public Community College Act, the
12 University of Illinois, Southern Illinois University, Chicago
13 State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State
14 University, Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois
15 University, Northern Illinois University, Western Illinois
16 University, and any other public university, college, or
17 community college now or hereafter established or authorized by
18 the General Assembly.

19 "Recovery model" means the model developed by the federal
20 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that
21 defines the process of recovery and includes the 4 major
22 dimensions that support a life in recovery, which are health,
23 home, purpose, and community.

24 "Resident assistant" means a student who is responsible for
25 supervising and assisting other, typically younger, students
26 who live in the same student housing facility.

1 "Telehealth" means the evaluation, diagnosis, or
2 interpretation of electronically transmitted patient-specific
3 data between a remote location and a licensed health care
4 professional that generates interaction or treatment
5 recommendations. "Telehealth" includes telemedicine and the
6 delivery of health care services provided by an interactive
7 telecommunications system, as defined in subsection (a) of
8 Section 356z.22 of the Illinois Insurance Code.

9 Section 25. Awareness. To raise mental health awareness on
10 college campuses, each public college or university must do all
11 of the following:

12 (1) Develop and implement an annual student
13 orientation session aimed at raising awareness about
14 mental health conditions.

15 (2) Assess courses and seminars available to students
16 through their regular academic experiences and implement
17 mental health awareness curricula if opportunities for
18 integration exist.

19 (3) Create and feature a page on its website or mobile
20 application with information dedicated solely to the
21 mental health resources available to students at the public
22 college or university and in the surrounding community.

23 (4) Distribute messages related to mental health
24 resources that encourage help-seeking behavior through the
25 online learning platform of the public college or

1 university during high stress periods of the academic year,
2 including, but not limited to, midterm or final
3 examinations. These stigma-reducing strategies must be
4 based on documented best practices.

5 (5) Three years after the effective date of this Act,
6 implement an online screening tool to raise awareness and
7 establish a mechanism to link or refer students of the
8 public college or university to services. Screenings and
9 resources must be available year round for students and, at
10 a minimum, must (i) include validated screening tools for
11 depression, an anxiety disorder, an eating disorder,
12 substance use, alcohol-use disorder, post-traumatic stress
13 disorder, and bipolar disorder, (ii) provide resources for
14 immediate connection to services, if indicated, including
15 emergency resources, (iii) provide general information
16 about all mental health-related resources available to
17 students of the public college or university, and (iv)
18 function anonymously.

19 (6) At least once per term and at times of high
20 academic stress, including midterm or final examinations,
21 provide students information regarding online screenings
22 and resources.

23 Section 30. Training.

24 (a) The board of trustees of each public college or
25 university must designate an expert panel to develop and

1 implement policies and procedures that (i) advise students,
2 faculty, and staff on the proper procedures for identifying and
3 addressing the needs of students exhibiting symptoms of mental
4 health conditions, (ii) promote understanding of the rules of
5 Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the
6 federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to increase
7 knowledge and understanding of student protections under the
8 law, and (iii) provide training if appropriate.

9 (b) The Technical Assistance Center under Section 45 shall
10 set initial standards for policies and procedures referenced in
11 subsection (a) to ensure statewide consistency.

12 (c) All resident assistants in a student housing facility,
13 advisors, and campus security of a public college or university
14 must participate in a national Mental Health First Aid training
15 course or a similar program prior to the commencement of their
16 duties. Training must include the policies and procedures
17 developed by the public college or university referenced under
18 subsection (a).

19 Section 35. Peer support.

20 (a) Because peer support programs may be beneficial in
21 improving the emotional well-being of the student population,
22 each public college or university must develop and implement a
23 peer support program utilizing student peers to support
24 individuals living with mental health conditions on campus.
25 Peer support programs may be housed within resident assistant

1 programs, counseling centers, or wellness centers on campus.

2 (b) Peer support programs must utilize best practices for
3 peer support, including, but not limited to: (i) utilizing the
4 tenets of the recovery model for mental health, (ii) adequate
5 planning and preparation, including standardizing guidance and
6 practices, identifying needs of the target population, and
7 aligning program goals to meet those needs, (iii) clearly
8 articulating policies, especially around role boundaries and
9 confidentiality, (iv) systematic screening with defined
10 selection criteria for peer supporters, such as communication
11 skills, leadership ability, character, previous experience or
12 training, and ability to serve as a positive role model, (v)
13 identifying benefits from peer status, such as experiential
14 learning, social support, leadership, and improved
15 self-confidence, (vi) continuing education for peer supporters
16 to support each other and improve peer support skills, and
17 (vii) flexibility in availability by offering services through
18 drop-in immediate support and the ability to book appointments.

19 Section 40. Local partnerships.

20 (a) Each public college or university must form strategic
21 partnerships with local mental health service providers to
22 improve overall campus mental wellness and augment on-campus
23 capacity. The strategic partnerships must include linkage
24 agreements with off-campus mental health service providers
25 that establish a foundation for referrals for students when

1 needs cannot be met on campus due to capacity or preference of
2 the student. The strategic partnerships must also include (i)
3 avenues for on-campus and off-campus mental health service
4 providers to increase visibility to students via marketing and
5 outreach, (ii) opportunities to engage the student body through
6 student outreach initiatives like mindfulness workshops or
7 campus-wide wellness fairs, and (iii) opportunities to support
8 awareness and training requirements under this Act.

9 (b) Through a combination of on-campus capacity,
10 off-campus linkage agreements with mental health service
11 providers, and contracted telehealth therapy services, each
12 public college or university shall attempt to meet a benchmark
13 ratio of one clinical, non-student staff member to 1,250
14 students. If linkage agreements are used, the agreements must
15 include the capacity of students providers are expected to
16 serve within the agency. Two years after the effective date of
17 this Act, and once every 5 years thereafter, the Technical
18 Assistance Center developed under Section 45 must propose to
19 the General Assembly an updated ratio based on actual ratios in
20 this State and any new information related to appropriate
21 benchmarks for clinician-to-student ratios. The updated
22 benchmark must represent a ratio of no less than one clinical,
23 non-student staff member to 1,250 students.

24 (c) Each public college or university must work with local
25 resources, such as on-campus mental health counseling centers
26 or wellness centers, local mental health service providers, or

1 non-providers, such as affiliates of the National Alliance on
2 Mental Illness, and any other resources to meet the awareness
3 and training requirements under Sections 25 and 30 of this Act.

4 Section 45. Technical Assistance Center. The Board of
5 Higher Education must develop a Technical Assistance Center
6 that is responsible for all of the following:

7 (1) Developing standardized policies for medical leave
8 related to mental health conditions for students of a
9 public college or university, which may be adopted by the
10 public college or university.

11 (2) Providing tailored support to public colleges or
12 universities in reviewing policies related to students
13 living with mental health conditions and their academic
14 standing.

15 (3) Establishing initial standards for policies and
16 procedures under subsection (a) of Section 30.

17 (4) Disseminating best practices around peer support
18 programs, including widely accepted selection criteria for
19 individuals serving in a peer support role.

20 (5) Developing statewide standards and best practices
21 for partnerships between local mental health agencies and
22 college campuses across this State.

23 (6) Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data
24 related to mental health needs and academic engagement
25 across this State.

1 (7) Housing data collected by each public college or
2 university related to Section 50 and analyzing and
3 disseminating best practices to each public college or
4 university and the public based on that data.

5 (8) Monitoring and evaluating linkage agreements under
6 Section 40 to ensure capacity is met by each public college
7 or university.

8 (9) Facilitating a learning community across all
9 public colleges or universities to support capacity
10 building and learning across those institutions.

11 Section 50. Evaluation. Each public college or university
12 must evaluate the following programs under this Act in the
13 following manner:

14 (1) Awareness and training programs under Sections 25
15 and 30 must be monitored for effectiveness and quality by
16 the public college or university. Monitoring measures
17 shall include, but are not limited to: (i) increased
18 understanding of mental health conditions, (ii) reduced
19 stigma toward mental health conditions, (iii) increased
20 understanding of mental health resources available to
21 students, (iv) increased understanding of resources for
22 mental health emergencies available to students, and (v)
23 viewing each mental health resource website or mobile
24 application of the public college or university.

25 (2) Peer support programs under Section 35 must be

1 monitored for effectiveness and quality by the public
2 college or university. Monitoring measures shall include,
3 but are not limited to: (i) improved symptomatology, (ii)
4 if needed, connection to additional services, (iii)
5 student satisfaction, (iv) wait time for drop-in
6 appointments, (v) wait time for scheduled appointments,
7 and (vi) satisfaction with the training curriculum for peer
8 supporters.

9 (3) Local partnership programs under Section 40 must be
10 monitored for effectiveness and quality by the public
11 college or university. Monitoring measures shall include,
12 but are not limited to: (i) wait time for drop-in
13 appointments for on-campus or off-campus telehealth
14 therapy providers, (ii) wait time for scheduled
15 appointments for on-campus or off-campus telehealth
16 therapy providers, (iii) the ratio of clinical,
17 non-student staff to student population and the number of
18 linkage agreements and contracts in place based on student
19 population, (iv) student satisfaction with on-campus or
20 off-campus telehealth therapy providers, (v) range of
21 treatment models offered to students, (vi) average length
22 of stay in treatment, (vii) number and range of student
23 outreach initiatives, such as telehealth mindfulness
24 workshops or campus-wide wellness fairs, and (viii) number
25 of students being served annually.

1 Section 55. Funding. This Act is subject to appropriation.
2 The Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability,
3 in conjunction with the Illinois Community College Board and
4 the Board of Higher Education, must make recommendations to the
5 General Assembly on the amounts necessary to implement this
6 Act. The initial recommendation must be provided by the
7 Commission no later than December 31, 2019. Any appropriation
8 provided in advance of this initial recommendation may be used
9 for planning purposes. No Section of this Act may be funded by
10 student fees created on or after July 1, 2020. Public colleges
11 or universities may seek federal funding or private grants, if
12 available, to support the provisions of this Act.

13 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,
14 2020, except that Section 55 and this Section take effect upon
15 becoming law.