

Date of Hearing: April 5, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 2122 (Choi) – As Amended March 9, 2022

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: mental health hotlines: student identification cards.

SUMMARY: Authorizes each campus of the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC), to establish a mental health hotline for students to access mental health services remotely.

Requires each campus of the CSU and the CCC, with a campus mental health hotline, and requests each campus of the UC, with a campus mental health hotline to have printed on either side of campus-issued student identification cards, on or after January 1, 2023, the telephone number of the campus mental health hotline.

Additionally, for campuses of the UC, CSU, and CCC that do not have campus mental health hotlines, this measure requires each campus of the CSU and CCC, and requests each campus of the UC, to have printed on either side of campus-issued student identification cards, on or after January 1, 2023, the telephone number of their city's or county's mental health hotline.

Lastly, this measure specifies that the campus-issued student identification card with the required or requested mental health hotline being printed on either side of the card, applies to a first student, and to a student identification card issued to replace a damaged or lost student identification card, anytime on or after January 1, 2023.

EXISTING LAW:

Federal law. Establishes the federal National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, designating the three-digit telephone number “988” as the universal number within the United States for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system operating through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) maintained by the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Veterans Crisis Line maintained by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. (Public Law No: 116-172, 10/17/2020).

State law.

- 1) Establishes the UC as a public trust to be administered by the Regents of the UC; and, grants the Regents full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to insure security of its funds, compliance with the terms of its endowments, statutory requirements around competitive bidding and contracts, sales of property and the purchase of materials, goods and services (Article IX, Section (9)(a) of the California Constitution).
- 2) Establishes the Donahoe Higher Education Act, setting forth the mission of the UC, CSU, and CCC (Education Code (EC) Section 66010, et seq.).

- 3) Confers upon the CSU Trustees the powers, duties, and functions with respect to the management, administration, control of the CSU system and provides that the Trustees are responsible for the rule of government of their appointees and employees (EC Sections 66606 and 89500, et seq.).
- 4) Establishes the CCC under the administration of the Board of Governors of the CCC, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. The CCC shall be comprised of community college districts (EC Section 70900).
- 5) Requires, beginning July 1, 2019, a public or private institution of higher education that issues student ID cards to have printed on either side of the cards the telephone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and authorizes, beginning July 1, 2019, the institutions that issue student ID cards to have printed on either side of the cards: 1) the Crisis Text Line; 2) the campus police or security telephone number or, if the campus does not have a campus police or security telephone number, the local nonemergency telephone number; and, 3) a local suicide prevention hotline telephone number. Requires a school or institution of higher education that has a supply of unissued identification cards that do not comply with the requirements of this bill to issue those identification cards until that supply is depleted. Specifies that the requirements apply for an ID card issued for the first time, and to ID cards issued to replace a damaged or lost ID card (EC Section 215.5).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Student mental health crisis.* According to the American College Health Association and the Health Minds Network, which has served as the voice for student health and wellness since 1920, a recent study and report conducted by the Network, entitled, “The Impact of COVID-19 on College Student Well-Being,” the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened mental health among college students. Nationwide, 60% of college students responded that the pandemic had made it more difficult to access mental health care.

Additionally, the study and report found that symptoms of mental health conditions remain high in college students, both before and after the start of the pandemic. Relative to Fall 2019, the prevalence of depression increased and substance use decreased in Spring 2020. Further, in March through May 2020, a higher proportion of students reported that their mental health negatively affected their academic performance.

Lastly, the study and report found that the prevalence of depression among college students nationally increased from 36% in Fall 2019, to 41% in Spring 2021, while the prevalence of anxiety increased from 31% to 34%.

Purpose of this measure. According to the author, “Not only has the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the [dire] situation of mental health crises among college students, but it has raised awareness to the glaring disparities in accessibility to mental health services in postsecondary institutions.”

The author contends that, “It is imperative that we support our students through both academic and personal development, offering the necessary resources for them to thrive in professional settings while fostering mental health.”

Further, the author states, “The inclusion of the actual campus’ mental health hotlines on student identification cards will ensure that college students have access to mental health resources in a crucial time of their lives, upholding California’s dedication to supporting students in higher education.”

Current status of student identification cards. There is no segment systemwide student identification card; each campus of the UC, CSU, and CCC issues unique identification cards. Committee Staff understands that some campus-issued student identification cards already include emergency and key contact numbers on the front or back of the cards.

To note, student identification cards are not issued every quarter or semester. Typically, currently-enrolled students receive a sticker with the semester or quarter listed that they adhere to their existing identification card. Additionally, student identification cards are not very large in size; most are approximately the same size of the California Driver's License.

This measure requires the campuses to have printed on either side of the campus-issued student identification cards, either the telephone number of the campus mental health hotline or the telephone number of their city’s or county’s mental health hotline.

While it is critical to ensure students are equipped with necessary contact information should they experience trauma or a situation that creates a mental health trigger for them, other critical prevention and assistance helpline numbers are already required to be placed on student identification cards; all critical telephone numbers will not fit on said identification cards.

How many? Currently, this measure requires campuses of the CSU and CCC, and requests campuses of the UC who have mental health hotlines, to provide the campus mental health hotline to either side of the campus-issued student identification card.

Committee Staff understands that currently, 13 of the 23 CSU campuses have campus mental health hotlines. Additionally, nine of the 10 UC campuses have campus mental health hotlines. It is presently unclear if any of the 116 CCC campuses have campus mental health hotlines.

Related legislation. AB 988 (Bauer-Kahan, et al.) of 2021, which is pending a hearing in the Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications, seeks to enact legislation to implement the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020, in compliance with rules adopted by the Federal Communication Commission, by July 16, 2022, designating “988” as a three-digit number for the NSPL.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK. The SAMHSA administers and funds the NSPL, in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, which manages the Veterans Crisis Line. A national network of local crisis hotline centers are in place with over 180 centers nationally (13 in California) which connect persons in each state to local crisis centers 24/7 through this toll-free number. Some states lack resources to answer calls locally causing national back-up centers to answer approximately 30% of all calls. This leads to longer wait times and fewer links to the best local care in those states. Over 10 million calls are answered annually, not all centers participating in the NSPL network take statewide calls and not all centers answer calls 24/7. California had the highest rate of calls initiated from the state (the most in the country; twice that of New York and a third more than Texas) from October to December 2020 with approximately 60,000 calls initiated and 50,000 calls answered for an in-state answered rate of 85%.

Committee comments. As noted in the “Related legislation” section of this analysis, AB 988 (Bauer-Kahan, et al.) of 2021, seeks to establish “988” as the state’s NSPL. However, AB 2122, in part, requires each campus of the CSU and CCC, and requests each campus of the UC, without its own campus mental health hotline, to have printed on either side of campus-issued student identification cards, on or after January 1, 2023, the telephone number of their city’s or county’s mental health hotline.

While not all mental health crisis’ lead to suicidal thoughts or actions, *moving forward, the author may wish to work with this Committee and other stakeholder groups in order to determine if this measure should be amended to instead of listing mental health hotlines for the city or county the campus resides in on campus-issued student identification cards, list the “988” number, pending enactment of AB 988 (Bauer-Kahan, et al.).*

Prior legislation. Throughout the last few years, several legislative measures have been introduced that sought to ensure students were equipped with necessary contact information for a variety of critical prevention and assistance helpline numbers on their campus-issued student identification cards. Some of the measures, include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) AB 624 (Gabriel) of 2019, which was vetoed by the Governor, would, in part, require, commencing July 1, 2020, every public postsecondary educational institution and nonsectarian private postsecondary educational institution, to print on student identification cards the telephone numbers for the National Sexual Assault Hotline and a local resource that provides sexual and reproductive health care information, as specified.
- 2) SB 316 (Rubio), Chapter 270, Statutes of 2019, required, in part, commencing on October 1, 2020, public or private institutions of higher education, that issue student identification cards, to print the telephone number for the National Domestic Violence Hotline or a local domestic violence hotline that provides confidential support services for students that have experienced domestic violence or stalking and is available by telephone 24 hours a day on back of those identification cards.
- 3) AB 2391 (Harper) of 2018, which died in the Senate Education Committee, would, in part, require, commencing July 1, 2019, a campus of the CCC or the CSU that issues student ID cards, and request a campus of the UC that issues student ID cards, to include on the back of the student ID cards the telephone numbers for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Crisis Text Line.
- 4) SB 972 (Portantino), Chapter 460, Statutes of 2018, required, in part, commencing on July 1, 2019, postsecondary institutions of learning, that issue student ID cards to have printed on either side of the ID card the number for a suicide hotline.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Generation Up, Inc. (GENup) (Sponsor)
 Student Senate for California Community Colleges
 1 Individual

Opposition

None on file.

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