

Date of Hearing: March 21, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Mike Fong, Chair
AB 456 (Maienschein) – As Introduced February 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: campus mental health hotlines.

SUMMARY: Requires each campus of the California Community Colleges (CCC) and the California State University (CSU), and requests each campus of the University of California (UC) without a campus mental health hotline, to establish a campus mental health hotline for students to access mental health services remotely that operates during working hours.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Removes the requirement that any campus of the CCC, CSU, or UC that does not have a campus mental health line print on either side of student identification cards the telephone number of their city's or county's mental health hotline.
- 2) Requires each campus of the CCC and CSU, and requests each campus of the UC without a campus mental health hotline, to establish a campus mental health hotline for students to access mental health services remotely that operates during working hours.
- 3) Specifies each campus, as enumerated in (2) above, may define its working hours.
- 4) Authorizes a campus, if a verbal hotline cannot be established, to utilize text hotlines or online messaging platforms offered by the campus.
- 5) Stipulates that a campus mental health hotline must direct a student to at least one of the following options:
 - a) A licensed mental health therapist;
 - b) A peer mental health trained support staff; and,
 - c) A psychiatrist.
- 6) Specifies that outside of working hours, a campus mental health hotline may direct a caller to any of the following:
 - a) Offline mental health services, including, but not limited to, messaging with the campus's health center or to off-campus services, such as a national suicide hotline, a California 988 mental health crisis hotline, or a local health center that offers mental health services;
 - b) In the case of mental emergencies, to a local or national hotline number that operates 24 hours per day and seven days per week; and,
 - c) In the case of physical emergencies, to 911.

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) Authorizes each campus of the CCC, CSU, and UC to establish a campus mental health hotline for students to access mental health services remotely (EC Section 66027.8).
- 6) 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).
- 7) Establishes the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act (Act), creating various protocols for the statewide 988 Suicide Prevention System (GOV, 53123.1, et seq.).

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, in 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, “With the academic and economic burdens of higher education, college students face an overwhelming amount of pressure and struggle with a variety of mental health issues. These mental health struggles have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative that we support students not only through academic development, but offer the necessary resources needed to deal with any burdens they may face.”

The author states, “AB 456 would require CSU campuses, CCC campuses, and request UC campuses to establish a campus mental health hotline, if one does not already exist, for students to access mental health services remotely.”

Further, the author contends that, “AB 456 would ensure all students have access to immediate mental health services, not just students who are financially able, helping eliminate financial inequalities.”

How many mental health hotlines? 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.

Committee comments. Is this measure premature? Federal law as listed above, 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 NSPL maintained by the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services’ SAMHSA and the Veterans Crisis Line maintained by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Additionally, state law, pursuant to AB 988 (Bauer-Kahan), Chapter 747, Statutes of 2022, establishes the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act (Act).

The Act, in part: 1) Requires, by July 16, 2022, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to ensure that designated 988 centers utilize technology that allow for transfers between 988 centers and 911 public safety answering points (PSAP); 2) Requires OES, by July 1, 2024, to verify interoperability between 988 and 911. Requires OES to consult with the NSPL and the Federal

SAMHSA on any technology requirements for 988 centers; and, 3) Requires California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHSA), by December 31, 2023, to create a set of recommendations to support a five-year implementation plan for a comprehensive 988 system.

Lastly, state law, pursuant to AB 2122 (Choi), Chapter 183, Statutes of 2022, does the following:

- 1) Authorizes each campus of the UC, the CSU, and the CCC, to establish a mental health hotline for students to access mental health services remotely.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.

The aforementioned state laws just went into effect – it may be premature to amend this law without having ample time for said laws to be thoroughly implemented.

Moving forward, the author may wish to reach out to the CCC, CSU, and UC and ask for data as to which of their campuses do not have a mental health hotlines, and, pending provided data, look to amend existing law potentially next Session.

Additionally, as currently drafted, this measure authorizes campuses of the CCC, CSU, and UC without a campus mental health hotline to establish a campus mental health hotline for students to access mental health services remotely that operates during working hours. Further, the measure authorizes each campus to establish its own working hours. Traditionally, working hours for a campus of the CCC, CSU, or UC, is 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Student mental health crises can take place any time of the day or night.

Moving forward, the author may wish to work with the CCC, CSU, and UC to ensure that the established “working hours” accommodate the needs of the students and allow for an adequate number of professionals to assist the needs of the students.

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 2122 (Choi), Chapter 183, Statutes of 2022, as described in the *Committee Comments* section of this analysis.
- 2) 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.

- 3) 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.
- 4) 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.
- 5) 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

California Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
GENup (Sponsor)

Opposition

None on file.

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