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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND  
HOSPITALS -- SUICIDE TREATMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT

Introduced By: Representative David A. Bennett

Date Introduced: January 25, 2021

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 40.1 of the General Laws entitled "BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE,  
2 DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND HOSPITALS" is hereby amended by adding thereto  
3 the following chapter:

4 CHAPTER 30

5 SUICIDE TREATMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT

6 **40.1-30-1. Short title and goals.**

7 (a) This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Suicide Treatment Improvement  
8 Act", and shall be so interpreted and construed as to effectuate its general purpose, notwithstanding  
9 any law or regulation to the contrary.

10 (b) The general purpose of this chapter shall be as follows:

11 (1) All suicidal patients will be treated with the same respect, compassion, and dignity as  
12 a patient with physical ailments.

13 (2) All medical and mental health personnel shall:

14 (i) Have good bedside manner;

15 (ii) Not re-traumatize a suicidal patient any more than they already have been traumatized;

16 (iii) Treat the patient in an age appropriate way;

17 (iv) Look for signs from caregivers to see if they are abusive, controlling or dysfunctional;

18 (v) Not stigmatize or discriminate against a suicidal patient in anyway;

- 1 [\(vi\) Receive anti-stigma of mental illness training; and](#)  
2 [\(vii\) Not psychologically test a patient while they are in a crisis or have recently been in a](#)  
3 [crisis.](#)

4 **40.1-30-2. Hospitals.**

5 [\(a\) All psychiatric wards, psychiatric hospitals, mental health treatment centers, suicide](#)  
6 [treatment centers, public and private, shall provide one-on-one suicide counseling to suicidal](#)  
7 [patients and patients who have attempted suicide.](#)

8 [\(b\) All health insurance providers shall provide medical insurance coverage necessary to](#)  
9 [effectuate the provisions of this chapter.](#)

10 [\(c\) All hospitals and centers licensed under chapter 24 of title 40.1 shall provide trained](#)  
11 [suicide counselors to be available twenty-four \(24\) hours a day and seven \(7\) days per week.](#)

12 [\(d\) All medical and mental health personal shall be provided a history and an assessment](#)  
13 [from the patient and the caregivers.](#)

14 **40.1-30-3. Procedures.**

15 [\(a\) Any patient admitted to the psychiatric ward of an emergency room shall be provided](#)  
16 [a suicide counselor in the emergency room to assess and give them suicide counseling immediately.](#)  
17 [The suicide counselor shall then determine if the patient needs to be admitted.](#)

18 [\(b\) Suicide counselors shall provide suicide counseling daily to patients in the psychiatric](#)  
19 [ward.](#)

20 [\(c\) No psychiatrist or hospital personnel shall:](#)

21 [\(1\) Discharge a patient into a homeless situation; or](#)

22 [\(2\) Send a suicide patient who is not a threat to others to a jail.](#)

23 **40.1-30-4. Suicide Hotlines.**

24 [All suicide and crisis hotlines shall provide suicide counseling as well as general mental](#)  
25 [health counseling.](#)

26 **40.1-30-5. Law enforcement.**

27 [\(a\) Law enforcement personnel responding to a call which involves a suicidal person shall](#)  
28 [include a suicide counselor to accompany them.](#)

29 [\(b\) Law enforcement personnel shall exercise extreme restraint when responding to a call](#)  
30 [involving a suicidal person and shall only use force or draw their weapons when someone is a threat](#)  
31 [to themselves or to others.](#)

32 [\(c\) The suicidal person shall be approached in a gentle and respectful manner.](#)

33 [\(d\) The suicide counselor shall give the person suicide counseling and shall assess to see if](#)  
34 [they need to be taken to the psychiatric ward.](#)

1           **40.1-30-6. Enforcement and compliance.**

2           The department of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals shall  
3 promulgate rules and regulations to determine the penalties and procedures to insure compliance  
4 with the provisions of this chapter.

5           **40.1-30-7. Severability.**

6           If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part of this chapter shall be adjudged by any  
7 court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the  
8 remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, section,  
9 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which the judgment shall have been rendered.

10           SECTION 2. Chapter 27-18 of the General Laws entitled "Accident and Sickness Insurance  
11 Policies" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

12           **27-18-85. Suicide treatment.**

13           Every individual or group health insurance contract, or every individual or group hospital  
14 of medical expense insurance policy, plan, or group policy delivered, issued for delivery, or  
15 renewed in this state on or after January 2022, shall provide coverage for suicide treatment pursuant  
16 to chapter 24.1 of title 40.1.

17           SECTION 3. Chapter 27-19 of the General Laws entitled "Nonprofit Hospital Service  
18 Corporations" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

19           **27-19-77. Suicide treatment.**

20           Every individual or group health insurance contract, or every individual or group hospital  
21 of medical expense insurance policy, plan, or group policy delivered, issued for delivery, or  
22 renewed in this state on or after January 2022, shall provide coverage for suicide treatment pursuant  
23 to chapter 24.1 of title 40.1.

24           SECTION 4. Chapter 27-20 of the General Laws entitled "Nonprofit Medical Service  
25 Corporations" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

26           **27-20-73. Suicide treatment.**

27           Every individual or group health insurance contract, or every individual or group hospital  
28 of medical expense insurance policy, plan, or group policy delivered, issued for delivery, or  
29 renewed in this state on or after January 2022, shall provide coverage for suicide treatment pursuant  
30 to chapter 24.1 of title 40.1.

31           SECTION 5. Chapter 27-41 of the General Laws entitled "Health Maintenance  
32 Organizations" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

33           **27-41-90. Suicide treatment.**

34           Every individual or group health insurance contract, or every individual or group hospital

1 [of medical expense insurance policy, plan, or group policy delivered, issued for delivery, or](#)  
2 [renewed in this state on or after January 2022, shall provide coverage for suicide treatment pursuant](#)  
3 [to chapter 24.1 of title 40.1.](#)

4 SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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RELATING TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND  
HOSPITALS -- SUICIDE TREATMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT

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- 1           This act would provide for the “Suicide Treatment Improvement Act” to improve the
- 2 delivery of suicide treatment.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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