

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Label: UB-54002

Date introduced: September 27th, 2017

Author(s): President Zhang, Director of External Affairs Alex

Sponsor(s): Senator Vora, Senator Rehman, Senator Alejandro, Senator Shofoluwe, Senator Pham, Senator Moghtader, Senator Daniels, Senator Cheung

Committee: Student Life

Draft: Final

Mental Health Crisis Bill

United States

Whereas, there has been a 21% increase in depression, 17% increase in anxiety, and 36% increase in attempted suicides on college campuses nationwide from 2011-2016¹;

Whereas, suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students²;

Whereas, 31% of college students have seriously considered suicide²;

Whereas, on average, the growth rate in number of students seeking services at counseling centers was more than 5 times the rate of institutional enrollment³;

Whereas, on average, the growth rate in counseling center appointments was more than 7 times the rate of institutional enrollment³;

Whereas, the average increase in demand for services, without proportionate increases in resources, will make it difficult to provide responsive mental health services for higher education institutions;

Whereas, the results from the Center for Collegiate Mental Health 2016 research report indicates that institutions should evaluate funding decisions based on observed clinical demand (the number/rate of students seeking services) rather than historical patterns of utilization that may no longer be reliable³;

Whereas, the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS) recommends a 1:1,500 staff to student ratio⁴;

Texas

Whereas, zero large public Texas universities or colleges meet IACS' 1:1,500 staff to student ratio recommendation;

Whereas, the state of Texas currently provides zero funds for mental health resources for public higher education institutions;

Whereas, Texas Education Code - EDUC § 51.9194 mandates general academic teaching institutions provide information regarding available mental health and suicide prevention services and warning signs of suicide in the form of a live presentation, online program, or video⁵;

University of Houston:

Whereas, among similarly sized Texas universities, the University of Houston Counseling and Psychological Services ranks last for staff to student ratio⁶;

Whereas, as of September 25th, 2017, UH Counseling and Psychological Services holds a 1:3,288 staff to student ratio⁷;

Whereas, the UH Counseling and Psychological Services would need 14 additional staff positions to meet IACS' recommended staff to student ratio⁷;

Whereas, the entry-level salaries for UH Counseling and Psychological Services ranges from \$55,000-\$70,000 and, therefore, it would require \$770,000-\$980,000 per year to hire 14 more counselors;

Whereas, following current models of growth, UH Counseling and Psychological Services will not exceed the IACS recommended ratio even with flat enrollment from 2016 until approximately 2031⁷;

Whereas, the University of Houston enrollment rates have grown 3.57% from 2016 to 2017;

Whereas, UH Counseling and Psychological Services' current facilities are outdated and not easily handicap accessible;

Whereas, students have reported a four to six week wait time on receiving counseling for non-urgent care;

Whereas, the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services and the Student Fees Advisory Committee has continuously supported UH Counseling and Psychological Services;

Whereas, funding from the state of Texas is necessary to provide the essential staff to student recommended ratio at the UH Counseling and Psychological Services;

Therefore be it resolved by the 54th Senate of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:

The University of Houston is in a mental health crisis.

Further it be enacted, UH Student Government Association plans to pursue legislation with the Texas Legislature and the United States Congress to help increase mental health resources across the state of Texas and the nation;

Further it be enacted, UH Student Government Association requests that the Texas Legislature declare mental health issues to be a public health crisis at Texas higher education institutions and provide solutions to resolve the crisis;

Further it be enacted, SGA recommends the Student Fees Advisory Committee to continue to prioritize the UH Counseling and Psychological Services;

Further it be enacted, the University of Houston should identify additional funds to be allocated to UH Counseling and Psychological Services;

Further it be enacted, we are requesting the support and aid of the Office of Governmental Relations at the University of Houston in pursuing Texas State and Congressional legislation;

Further it be enacted, University Advancement should develop a fundraising strategy with implementation for additional resources supporting UH Counseling and Psychological Services to address the mental health crisis on campus;

Further it be enacted, the Texas Education Code - EDUC § 51.9194 should be amended to add text supporting general academic teaching institutions to develop, implement, and post online a policy to advise students and staff of suicide prevention programs, both on and off campus, to include crisis intervention access and suicide prevention hotlines, mental health program access, student communication and outreach plans, and postvention plans;

Further it be enacted, UH Student Government Association supports legislation requiring the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to award grants to institutions of higher education to provide and improve mental

health and behavioral health services, conduct research about the mental health of students, and expand outreach and training on college and university campuses, similar to House Resolution 4374 from the 114th United States Congress;

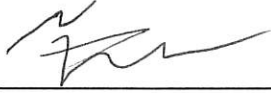
Further it be enacted, the UH Student Government Association urges other Student Government Associations/Student Councils/Student Associations with comparable circumstances on their campus to pass similarly formatted legislation to ignite a nationwide reform on mental health resources in higher education.



Sources

1. Suchy, Dean (2016). Comparisons on Mental Health from 2011-2016.
2. American Association of Suicidology (2016). *College Students & Suicide [Fact Sheet]*
3. Center for Collegiate Mental Health. (2016, January). *2015 Annual Report* (Publication No. STA 15-108).
4. International Association of Counseling Services. Statement Regarding Recommended Staff to Student Ratios. Retrieved from <http://www.iacsinc.org/staff-to-student-ratios.html>.
5. Texas EDUC § 51.9194 (2015)
6. Pattani, Aneri. (2016, August 9). Texas Colleges Lag in Mental Health Services. Retrieved from <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/08/09/texas-universities-struggle-fund-mental-health-ser/>.
7. Dr. Norma Ngo (2016). *An overview of Programs and Challenges*. N.A., N.A: N.A.

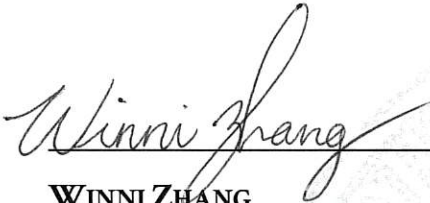
UB-54002: MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS BILL



FAHAD REHAN
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

09/27/2017

DATE OF SENATE APPROVAL



WINNI ZHANG
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

APPROVED

ACTION BY PRESIDENT

10/4/2017

DATE

DR. RENU KHATOR
PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

DATE

☐ **Approve** ☐ **Approve with Modifications** ☐ **Disapprove**

IF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY APPROVES WITH MODIFICATIONS OR DISAPPROVES OF THE LEGISLATION, THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REQUESTS THAT PRESIDENT RECORD THEIR COMMENTS BELOW OR IN AN ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENT.

