

Executive Summary: Health Impact Review of SB 5525

Concerning Veterans' Mental Health Services at Institutions of Higher Education

(2017-2018 Legislative Session)

Evidence indicates that SB 5525 has the potential to increase access to and use of mental health services at institutions of higher education for student, faculty, and staff veterans, as well as their spouses and dependents which in turn has the potential to improve mental health outcomes and decrease mental health disparities.

BILL INFORMATION

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, Palumbo, Cleveland, Baumgartner, Zeiger, O'Ban, Lias, Frockt, Schoesler, Hobbs, Kuderer, Conway, Bailey

Summary of Bill:

- Requires all four-year public institutions of higher education to hire at least one full-time mental health counselor who has experience working with active members of the military or military veterans to work with student, faculty, and staff veterans, as well as their spouses and dependents.

HEALTH IMPACT REVIEW

Summary of Findings:

This review assumes that if the four-year public institutions of higher education in Washington employ at least one full-time mental health counselor with experience working with active members of the military or military veterans that this would increase access to and use of mental health services for student, faculty, and staff veterans, as well as their spouses and dependents. This informed assumption is based on discussions with staff from the veterans resource centers at each of the potentially impacted schools and their knowledge of the current needs of their student, staff, and faculty veterans. The assumption is also based on evidence regarding current barriers to accessing services for veterans.

This Health Impact Review found the following evidence regarding the provisions in SB 5525:

- Very strong evidence that increased access to and utilization of mental health services would likely improve mental health outcomes for student, faculty, and staff veterans, as well as their spouses and dependents.
- Very strong evidence that improved mental health outcomes for student, faculty, and staff veterans as well as their spouses and dependents would likely decrease health disparities.

FULL REVIEW

For review methods, logic model, strength-of-evidence analyses, and citations of empirical evidence refer to the full Health Impact Review:

<http://sboh.wa.gov/Portals/7/Doc/HealthImpactReviews/HIR-2017-11-SB5525.pdf>

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