

(H. B. 862)

(No. 180)

(Approved September 1, 2006)

AN ACT

To add subsections (f) and (g) of Section 4 of Act No. 227 of August 12, 1999, known as the “Act to Implement the Public Policy on Suicide Prevention,” in order to include among the responsibilities of the Commission for the Implementation of the Public Policy on Suicide Prevention to provide advice in the design and to coordinate with the Board of Medical Examiners of Puerto Rico, the Examining Boards attached to the Department of Health or any other Examining Board established through legislation in Puerto Rico with inherence on suicidal behavior problem that the continuing education plans of each of the regulated professions that work with said manifestation establish continuing education courses on the identification of risk factors for suicidal behavior, as well as the early detection, handling, and adequate referral of suicidal behavior and the duty of the Commission to prepare a Strategic Plan in which the specific responsibilities of each agency belonging to the Committee as to compliance with the Action Plan established in Section 5 of this Act are set forth, so that the latter may be implemented in its dependencies in order to comply with all departments and provisions of this Act.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Suicide is the most extreme manifestation of violence since it is self-induced violence, against oneself and against others. Based on the statistics of the Department of Health, in the last fourteen years in Puerto Rico, four thousand three hundred eighty-five (4,385) persons have taken their lives. Of these, ninety (90) percent were male and ten (10) percent were female, and the annual average death rate was three hundred and thirteen (313). In

this period of time, two hundred and twelve (212) children and adolescents have committed suicide, with an average of fifteen (15) suicides per year, and in this last group, ninety (90) percent were between 15 and 19 years of age. An important, but a sad factor to analyze is that according to the Department of Health, suicide is the third leading cause of violent deaths for males ages 15 to 34 in Puerto Rico.

Act No. 227 of August 12, 1999, known as the Act to Implement the Public Policy on Suicide Prevention was approved in order to attack this problem. In this Act, the government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico recognized as public policy that suicide is one of the most alarming and complex problems faced by our society and that in developing the public policy on this matter, scientific and clinical research on suicide as well as the prevention, intervention, handling and aftermath of suicide must be emphasized, high lighting to the extent of the problem and the right of the citizens to receive clinical and rehabilitation services without stigmatizing themselves and their families.

Notwithstanding the creation of this Act, it is necessary for the Legislature to establish among the responsibilities of the Commission for the Implementation of the Public Policy on Suicide Prevention to provide advice in the design and to coordinate with the Board of Medical Examiners of Puerto Rico, with the Examining Boards attached to the Department of Health or with any other Examining Board established through legislation in Puerto Rico with inherence on the suicidal behavior problem, that the continuing education plans of each of the regulated professions that work with said manifestation establish continuing education courses on the identification of risk factors for suicidal behavior, as well as the early detection, handling, and adequate referral of suicidal behaviors and the duty

of the Commission to prepare a Strategic Plan in which the specific responsibilities of each agency belonging to the Committee as to compliance with the Action Plan established in Section 5 of this Act are set forth, so that the latter may be implemented in its dependencies in order to comply with all departments and provisions of this Act.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Subsections (f) and (g) are hereby added to Section 4 of Act No. 227 of August 12, 1999, known as the “Act to Implement the Public Policy on Suicide Prevention,” to read as follows:

“Section 4.- Responsibilities

(a) ...

(e) ...

(f) It shall be the duty of the Commission to draft a Strategic Plan in which the specific responsibilities of each of the agencies belonging to the Committee as to the compliance with the Action Plan set forth in Section 5 of this Act, so that the same be implemented within their dependencies for compliance with all departments and provisions of this Act. The Commission shall give priority to the establishment of prevention programs for children and youths in its Strategic Plan. Thus, the Committee shall have an eight (8) month term after the approval of this Act to draft said Strategic Plan and to submit the same before the Governor and the Legislature for the proper budget request and any legislature amendment necessary for the implementation thereof.

(g) The Commission shall coordinate or establish collaborative agreements with the Board of Medical Examiners of Puerto Rico,

the Examining Boards attached to the Department of Health or any other Examining Board established through legislation in Puerto Rico with inherece on the suicidal behavior problem that the continuing education plans of each of the regulated professions that work with said manifestation establish continuing education courses on the identification of risk factors for suicidal behavior, as well as the early detection, prevention programs and the handling, and adequate referral of suicidal behavior.

Section 2.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 180 (H.B. 862) of the 4th Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to add subsections (f) and (g) of Section 4 of Act No. 227 of August 12, 1999, known as the “Act to Implement the Public Policy on Suicide Prevention,” in order to include among the responsibilities of the Commission for the Implementation of the Public Policy on Suicide Prevention to provide advice in the design and to coordinate with the Board of Medical Examiners of Puerto Rico, the Examining Boards attached to the Department of Health or any other Examining Board established through legislation in Puerto Rico with inherece on suicidal behavior problem that the continuing education plans of each of the regulated professions that work with said manifestation establish continuing education courses on the identification of risk factors for suicidal behavior, etc.,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 8th of December of 2006.

Francisco J. Domenech
Director