

HB 920 -- STUDENT COUNSELING FACILITIES

SPONSOR: Frederick

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 8 to 0. Voted "To Return to the Committee of Origin" by the Standing Committee on Rules - Administrative Oversight by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 8 to 0.

Prior to January 1, 2018, the Department of Higher Education must promulgate rules establishing the Coordinating Board for Mental Health Issues in Higher Education (CBMHI). The CBMHI will consist of representatives from the Coordinating Board for Higher Education and designated counseling directors from each public institution of higher education in Missouri. Committee membership will change ever four years, and no two members can be employed by the same institution or engaged in a supervisory relationship of any kind.

Prior to January 1, 2018, CBMHI shall set forth reasonable standards and regulations for student counseling facilities at public institutions of higher education relating to mental health problems within the academic community.

After developing such standards and regulations, CBMHI must develop a process for evaluating these student counseling programs. CBMHI shall create procedures for annual review of an institution's counseling program when it fails to meet the standards.

Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, student counseling facilities in operation at public institutions of higher education must participate in an annual needs assessment to identify deficiencies that place such facilities below standards established by CBMHI.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill will assess and improve the mental health treatment available to college students. Currently, some students must wait months for mental health treatment. Students need accessibility and a quick response for mental health issues. Counseling centers improve academic performance.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Frederick; The Associated Students of the University of Missouri; Deanna Santamaria; Kelly Webber and Mary Hart, Mizzou Student Suicide Prevention Coalition; and Brooke Wiggins.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that treatment of college students' mental health is important and is an investment in the state's future.

Testifying on the bill was Paul Polychronis.