



One Hundred First Legislature - First Session - 2009
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 603

Chairperson: Tim Gay
Committee: Health and Human Services
Date of Hearing: February 19, 2009

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 603 would create the Behavioral Health Workforce Act. The intent of LB 603 is to improve community-based behavioral health services by increasing the number of behavioral health professionals and providing training to these professionals in evidence-based practice and alternatives delivery methods, including utilizing existing infrastructure and telehealth services resulting in an expanded outreach in rural areas of Nebraska.

Under the bill, the Behavioral Health Education Center would be created and administered by the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The center shall:

- Provide funds for two additional medical residents in a Nebraska-based psychiatry program each year starting in 2010 until a total of eight additional psychiatry residents are added in 2013;
- Beginning in 2011 and every year thereafter, provide psychiatric residents training experiences that serve rural Nebraska and other underserved areas.
- Require each center-funded residents to participate in rural training for a minimum of one year and beginning in 2012 require a minimum of two of the eight-center funded residents to be active in rural training each year;
- Focus on the training of behavioral health professionals in telehealth techniques, including the use of a telehealth network that exists, and other innovative means of care delivery;
- Analyze the geographic and demographic availability of behavioral health professionals in the state including, psychiatrists, social workers, community rehabilitation workers, psychologists, substance abuse counselors, licensed mental health practitioners, behavioral analysts, peer support providers, primary care physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners and pharmacists;
- Prioritize the need for additional professionals by type and location;
- Establish learning collaborative partnerships with other higher education institutions in the state, hospitals, law enforcement, community-based agencies and consumers and their families;
- Develop two interdisciplinary behavioral health training sites each year until a total of six sites have been developed. Four of the six sites must be in counties with a population of

fewer than 50,000. Each site shall provide annual interdisciplinary training opportunities for a minimum of three behavioral health professionals;

- Beginning December 1, 2011, and every odd-numbered year thereafter, the center shall prepare a report of its activities under the Behavioral Health Workforce Act.

LB 603 would create the Behavioral Health Workforce Cash Fund. As drafted, the bill calls for the fund to include revenue transferred from the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund, as well revenue received from gifts, grants, bequests, donations and other contributions from public or private sources.

The bill contains the emergency clause.

Principal Introducer:

Tim Gay, Chairperson
Committee on Health and Human Services