

HCS HB 1658 -- COMPASSIONATE MEDICAL EDUCATION ACT

SPONSOR: Frederick

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Health and Mental Health Policy by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass with House Committee Substitute" by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill creates the Show-Me Compassionate Medical Education Act and designates August 28, 2016, as "Show-Me Compassionate Medical Education Day" in Missouri. Citizens are encouraged to participate in activities and events to increase awareness regarding medical student wellbeing.

A medical school may not restrict any specified organization from conducting a study of the prevalence of mental health issues among medical students or punishing a specified organization or student for any involvement with such a study.

The bill creates the Show-Me Compassionate Medical Education Research Project Committee, specifies the tasks of the committee, and permits medical schools in the state to collaborate with the committee to conduct a study of how to reduce medical student depression and suicide. The requirements of any study conducted under the provisions of the bill are specified and the committee is required to produce an annual report that must be made available on each medical school's website and provided to the General Assembly.

The bill contains an emergency clause.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that medical students have a large amount of material to master in a short amount of time. They are constantly surrounded by people who tell them that if they don't know all of the material, they might kill someone. It's like hazing that lasts for four years and changes the students' lifestyles for four years. It is isolating and medical students cannot seek help for depression or other mental health issues because doing so could have a very large impact on the student's career or even stop it. This is especially true with licensing requirements and Bureau of Narcotic and Dangerous Drugs requirements. The rate of depression among medical students is much higher than that of others their age and can be as much as six times higher. Suicide has become the second highest cause of death of medical students behind accidents. The problem is real, widespread, and largely unresolved. As a medical student it is hard to figure out when you're getting depressed and you don't have anyone you can go to without getting stigmatized by those around you. Medical students have to operate daily at a level that is unsustainable. There is a severe lack of knowledge about

depression which prohibits medical students from recognizing the symptoms in themselves and their friends and classmates.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Frederick; Michele & John Dietl; Representative Montecillo; Missouri Psychiatric Society; Washington University; Missouri State Medical Association; Missouri Psychological Association; and University Of Missouri Healthcare.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.