

ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2025
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LB217

Hearing Date: Wednesday February 12, 2025
Committee On: Health and Human Services
Introducer: Fredrickson
One Liner: Require suicide awareness and prevention training for employees of child-placing agencies and child welfare workers

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Advanced to General File

Vote Results:
Aye: 7 Senators Hardin, Ballard, Fredrickson, Hansen, Meyer, Quick, Riepe
Nay:
Absent:
Present Not Voting:

Testimony:

Proponents:

Senator John Fredrickson
Jennifer Carter
Josephine Litwinowicz
Micheal Dwyer
Scott Thomas

Representing:

Opening Presenter
Office of Inspector General, Child Welfare
Higher Power Church
self
Village in Progress

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Ryan Stanton

Representing:

CEO, Compass; NE Alliance of Family and Child Service Partners

* ADA Accommodation Written Testimony

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

LB 217 requires DHHS to develop suicide awareness and prevention training for child welfare staff, foster care providers and child-placing agencies incorporating evidence-based practices. Training requirements are provided.

Sec. 1: For purposes of providing training for individuals involved in the child welfare system, DHHS is required to develop a baseline of curriculum and training materials related to suicide awareness and prevention in consultation with statewide and national organizations with expertise in behavioral and mental health and suicide prevention. These organizations include, but not be limited to, the Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska. All such suicide awareness and prevention training shall



incorporate evidence-based practices and may, include, but not be limited to identification of early warning signs and symptoms of behavioral/mental health issues for youth in the child welfare system and appropriate and effective responses for behavioral/mental health issues and trauma-informed care.

Sec. 2: All staff involved in the DHHS child welfare system that provides direct services to children or families or interact directly with children or families, and other appropriate personnel as determined by DHHS, shall have training in suicide awareness and prevention. Such training shall include at least 90 minutes of behavioral/mental health training with a focus on suicide awareness and prevention prior to any independent contact with youth and families and annually thereafter. Such training shall be provided within the framework of existing training programs offered by DHHS.

Sec. 3: DHHS is required to include suicide awareness and prevention training for initial licensure and renewal of foster care licensure.

Sec. 4: Section 5 of this act (child-placing agencies) shall be cited as the Children's Residential Facilities and Placing Licensure Act.

Sec. 5: DHHS is required to establish standardized suicide awareness and prevention training requirements for all employees of a child-placing agency prior to any independent contact with youth and families. Such training shall incorporate a baseline of curriculum materials while also allowing a child-placing agency to incorporate training elements that meet the specific needs of the individual agency. DHHS may approve the existing curriculum of a child placing agency if such curriculum meets the baseline of curriculum.

Sec. 6: This act becomes operative on October 1, 2025.

Sec. 7: Repealer

Brian Hardin, Chairperson

