

WHEREAS, Youth suicide is a phenomenon which must be addressed by a concerned society and which can only be solved through the combined efforts of individuals, families, community organizations, public officials, agencies, educators and community leaders; and

WHEREAS, The effort to prevent youth suicide has been initiated in several jurisdictions throughout the State; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Education

SUBTITLE 4A. YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHOOL PROGRAMS

7-4A-01.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

(1) A STATEWIDE YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHOOL PROGRAM IS ESSENTIAL TO ADDRESS THE CONTINUING PROBLEM OF YOUTH SUICIDE THROUGHOUT THE STATE;

(2) THE YOUTH SUICIDE PROBLEM OFTEN EXISTS IN COMBINATION WITH OTHER PROBLEMS, INCLUDING DRUG ABUSE AND ALCOHOL USE;

(3) A SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE MUST EMPHASIZE A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS AND COMMUNITY SUICIDE PREVENTION AND CRISIS CENTER AGENCIES.

(4) IT IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE THAT A STATEWIDE YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHOOL PROGRAM BE ESTABLISHED WITH SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AT BOTH THE STATE AND COUNTY LEVELS, AND THAT THIS COOPERATION SHALL BE A MAJOR TOOL IN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THE SUCCESSFUL PREVENTION OF YOUTH SUICIDE.

(5) COUNTY SUICIDE PREVENTION AND CRISIS CENTER AGENCIES ALONG WITH LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES ARE BEST SUITED FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS FOR STATEWIDE YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION.

7-4A-02.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) "PROGRAM" MEANS A YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHOOL PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

(C) "YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU" MEANS A PROGRAM DEFINED UNDER § 6-122 OF THE HEALTH - GENERAL ARTICLE.