

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5251

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to promote mental wellness and resilience and heal mental health, behavioral health, and psychosocial problems through age and culturally appropriate community programs, and award grants for the purpose of establishing, operating, or expanding community-based mental wellness and resilience programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 14, 2022

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MERKLEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to promote mental wellness and resilience and heal mental health, behavioral health, and psychosocial problems through age and culturally appropriate community programs, and award grants for the purpose of establishing, operating, or expanding community-based mental wellness and resilience programs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Community Mental
 5 Wellness and Resilience Act of 2022”.

6 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY MENTAL**
 7 **WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE PROGRAMS.**

8 Title III of the Public Health Service Act is amended
 9 by inserting after section 317U (42 U.S.C. 247b–23) the
 10 following:

11 **“SEC. 317V. GRANT PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY WELLNESS**
 12 **AND RESILIENCE PROGRAMS.**

13 “(a) GRANTS.—

14 “(1) PROGRAM GRANTS.—

15 “(A) AWARDS.—The Secretary, acting
 16 through the Director of the Centers for Disease
 17 Control and Prevention, in coordination with
 18 the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and
 19 Substance Use and the Administrator of the
 20 Health Resources and Services Administration,
 21 shall carry out a program of awarding grants to
 22 eligible entities, on a competitive basis, for the
 23 purpose of establishing, operating, or expanding
 24 community mental wellness and resilience pro-
 25 grams.

1 “(B) AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant
 2 under subparagraph (A) shall not exceed
 3 \$4,000,000.

4 “(2) PLANNING GRANTS.—

5 “(A) AWARDS.—The Secretary, acting
 6 through the Director of the Centers for Disease
 7 Control and Prevention, in coordination with
 8 the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and
 9 Substance Use and the Administrator of the
 10 Health Resources and Services Administration,
 11 shall award grants to entities—

12 “(i) to organize a consortium that
 13 meets the requirements of subsection (c);

14 “(ii) to perform assessments of need
 15 with respect to community mental wellness
 16 and resilience; and

17 “(iii) to prepare an application for a
 18 grant under paragraph (1).

19 “(B) AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant
 20 under subparagraph (A), with respect to any
 21 consortium to be organized for applying for a
 22 grant under paragraph (1), shall not exceed
 23 \$15,000.

24 “(b) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—A community men-
 25 tal wellness and resilience program funded pursuant to a

1 grant under subsection (a)(1) shall take a public health
2 approach to mental health to strengthen the entire com-
3 munity’s psychological and emotional wellness and resil-
4 ience, including by—

5 “(1) collecting and analyzing information from
6 residents, as well as quantitative data, to identify—

7 “(A) protective factors that enhance and
8 sustain the community’s capacity for mental
9 wellness and resilience; and

10 “(B) risk factors that undermine such ca-
11 pacity;

12 “(2) strengthening such protective factors and
13 addressing such risk factors;

14 “(3) building awareness, skills, tools, and lead-
15 ership in the community to—

16 “(A) facilitate using a public health ap-
17 proach to mental health; and

18 “(B) heal mental health and psychosocial
19 problems among all adults and youth; and

20 “(4) developing, implementing, and continually
21 evaluating and improving a comprehensive strategic
22 plan for carrying out the activities described in para-
23 graphs (1), (2) and (3) that includes—

24 “(A) evidence-based or promising best
25 practices for—

1 “(i) enhancing local economic and en-
 2 vironmental conditions and environmental
 3 resilience, including with respect to the
 4 built environment;

5 “(ii) becoming trauma-informed and
 6 learning simple self-administrable mental
 7 wellness and resilience skills;

8 “(iii) engaging in community activities
 9 that strengthen mental wellness and resil-
 10 ience;

11 “(iv) partaking in nonclinical group
 12 and community-minded recovery and heal-
 13 ing programs; and

14 “(v) other activities to promote men-
 15 tal wellness and resilience, combat climate
 16 anxiety, and heal individual and commu-
 17 nity traumas; and

18 “(B) age-appropriate and culturally appro-
 19 priate methods to engage people in building so-
 20 cial connections.

21 “(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—

22 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a
 23 grant under subsection (a)(1), an applicant shall be
 24 a nonprofit or community organization that has en-
 25 tered into, or will use planning funding awarded

1 under subsection (a)(2) to enter into, a consortium
2 with entities from at least 5 of the categories listed
3 in paragraph (2).

4 “(2) CATEGORIES.—The categories listed in
5 this paragraph are the following:

6 “(A) Grassroots groups, neighborhood as-
7 sociations, and volunteer civic organizations.

8 “(B) Elementary and secondary schools,
9 institutions of higher education including com-
10 munity colleges, job-training programs, and
11 other education or training agencies or organi-
12 zations.

13 “(C) Youth after-school and summer pro-
14 grams.

15 “(D) Family and early childhood education
16 programs.

17 “(E) Faith and spirituality organizations.

18 “(F) Senior care organizations.

19 “(G) Climate change mitigation and adap-
20 tation, and environmental conservation, groups
21 and organizations.

22 “(H) Social and environmental justice
23 groups and organizations.

24 “(I) Disaster preparedness and response
25 groups and organizations.

1 “(J) Businesses and business associations.

2 “(K) Agencies and organizations involved
3 with community safety.

4 “(L) Social work, mental health, behavioral
5 health, substance use, physical health, and pub-
6 lic health professionals; public health agencies
7 and institutions; and mental health, behavioral
8 health, social work, and other professionals,
9 groups, organizations, agencies, and institutions
10 in the health and human services fields.

11 “(M) The general public, including individ-
12 uals who have experienced mental health or
13 psychosocial problems who can represent and
14 engage with populations relevant to the commu-
15 nity.

16 “(d) PRIORITY.—In awarding a grant under sub-
17 section (a)(1) or (a)(2), the Secretary shall give priority
18 to applicants proposing to carry out a community mental
19 wellness and resilience program that uses a public health
20 approach to mental health to develop, implement, and con-
21 tinually evaluate and improve age and culturally appro-
22 priate education, skills training, and other services that
23 use a strength-based approach to enhance the capacity for
24 mental wellness and resilience for all types of toxic

1 stresses and traumas among all adults and youth in the
2 community.

3 “(e) REPORT.—

4 “(1) SUBMISSION.—Not later than the end of
5 calendar year 2028, the Secretary shall submit a re-
6 port to the Congress on the results of the grants
7 under subsection (a)(1).

8 “(2) CONTENTS.—Such report shall include a
9 summary of the best practices used by grantees in
10 establishing, operating, or expanding community
11 mental wellness and resilience programs.

12 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

13 “(1) The term ‘public health approach to men-
14 tal health’ refers to methods that—

15 “(A) take a population-level approach to
16 promote mental wellness and resilience to pre-
17 vent problems before they emerge and heal
18 them when they do appear, not merely treating
19 individuals one at a time after symptoms of pa-
20 thology appear; and

21 “(B) address mental health and psycho-
22 social problems by—

23 “(i) identifying and strengthening ex-
24 isting protective factors, and forming new
25 ones, that buffer people from and enhance

1 their capacity for psychological and emo-
2 tional resilience; and

3 “(ii) taking a holistic systems perspec-
4 tive that recognizes that most mental
5 health and psychosocial problems result
6 from numerous interrelated personal, fam-
7 ily, social, economic, and environmental
8 factors that require multipronged commu-
9 nity-based interventions.

10 “(2) The term ‘community’ means people,
11 groups, and organizations that reside in or work
12 within a specific geographic area, such as a city,
13 neighborhood, subdivision, urban, suburban, or rural
14 locale.

15 “(3) The term ‘community trauma’ means a
16 blow to the basic fabric of social life that damages
17 the bonds attaching people together, impairs their
18 prevailing sense of community, undermines their
19 fundamental sense of safety, justice, equity, and se-
20 curity, and heightens individual and collective fears
21 and feelings of vulnerability.

22 “(4) The term ‘protective factors’ means
23 strengths, skills, resources, and characteristics
24 that—

1 “(A) are associated with a lower likelihood
2 of negative outcomes of adversities; or

3 “(B) reduce the impact on people of toxic
4 stresses or a traumatic experience.

5 “(5) The term ‘mental wellness’ means a state
6 of well-being in which an individual can—

7 “(A) realize their own potential;

8 “(B) constructively cope with the stresses
9 of life;

10 “(C) work productively and fruitfully; and

11 “(D) make a contribution to their commu-
12 nity.

13 “(6) The term ‘psychosocial problem’ refers to
14 how an individual’s mental health or behavioral
15 health problem disturbs others such as children,
16 families, communities, or society.

17 “(7) The term ‘resilience’ means that people de-
18 velop cognitive, psychological, emotional capabilities
19 and social connections that enable them to calm
20 their body, mind, emotions, and behaviors during
21 toxic stresses or traumatic experiences in ways that
22 enable them to—

23 “(A) respond without negative con-
24 sequences for themselves or others; and

1 “(B) use the experiences as catalysts to de-
2 velop a constructive new sense of meaning, pur-
3 pose, and hope.

4 “(8) The term ‘toxic stress’ means exposure to
5 a persistent overwhelming traumatic and stressful
6 situations.

7 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
8 carry out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
9 priated \$30,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2024
10 through 2028.”.

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