



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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VanderMeer's Suicide Prevention Bill Passes Senate and Assembly

Madison – Representative Nancy VanderMeer's (R-Tomah) legislation modeled after the Monroe County Mental Health Coalition's work passed both houses of the State Legislature on Tuesday during floor sessions held in the State Senate and State Assembly, respectively. [Assembly Bill 566](#), authored by VanderMeer, was initially introduced in 2019 as part of a broader package of bills recommended by the [Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention](#).

Representative VanderMeer released the following statement:

"Usually, persistence pays off. This is the third consecutive legislative session that Senator Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) and I have introduced this legislation and I'm very happy that we were able to get the bill passed in both houses yesterday. I served on the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention during the 2019 Legislative Session and enjoyed the opportunity to help facilitate the Monroe County Mental Health Coalition appearing before the task force to share their great work. I'm happy to be a part of the coalition and am grateful for everything they do in Monroe County. This bill utilizes existing federal funding to allow local mental health organizations across the state, like the Monroe County Mental Health Coalition, to apply for and receive grants through the Department of Health Services, for suicide prevention programming.

"Thank you to the Monroe County Mental Health Coalition for their support and contributions in person and otherwise as this legislation has moved forward in previous legislative sessions. Many times, I've been happy to share the great work they do with my colleagues as I attempted to persuade them on the value of these efforts. I encourage the governor to sign this bill and allow similar programs to bring value throughout the state."

2023 Assembly Bill 566 creates a grant program within the Department of Health Services, utilizing \$250,000 of existing federal funds, to award grants to local mental health organizations or coalitions throughout the state for suicide prevention programming. Under the bill, an organization receiving a grant is required to match the grant at a value equal of at least 20% of the grant, and grant amounts will be limited to no more than \$25,000 per organization in a fiscal year.



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The bill passed the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care and the Senate Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Children and Families unanimously prior to floor passage. In 2019, [AB 530/SB 504](#) passed the Assembly 92-3, as amended. In 2021, [Assembly Bill 210/Senate Bill 253](#) passed unanimously out of the Assembly Committee on Mental Health and the Senate Committee on Human Services, Children and Families.

Information on the Monroe County Mental Health Coalition and their work can be found here: <https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/departments/health-department/partnerships/monroe-county-mental-health-coalition>

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255, or text HOPELINE to 741-741.

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The 70th Assembly District includes portions of Monroe, Jackson, Portage and Wood counties.