



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Democratic Assembly Mental Health Committee Members Introduce the “Mental Healthcare is Healthcare” Legislative Package

MADISON - Today, the Democratic members of the Assembly Mental Health Committee — State Representative Robyn Vining (D-Wauwatosa), Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee), Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo), and Rep. Supreme Moore Omokunde (D-Milwaukee) — introduced a legislative package with five bills to support mental healthcare access for K-12 students, UW students, and veterans. Rep. Vining, Rep. Brostoff, Rep. Considine, and Rep. Moore Omokunde issued the following statement regarding this legislative package:

“Ensuring adequate mental healthcare for kids is critical not only for the wellbeing of our students, but also their academic success. Now more than ever, students need access to quality mental health resources and support. In order for schools to meet their students’ mental health needs, they need access to mental health providers and we need to better equip teachers with training on social and emotional learning.

“The stresses of being a college student can weigh heavily on individuals who often have to balance a full academic load along with a job, internship, volunteer work, social life, and self care. These factors, along with other outside factors, can lead to higher rates of burnout and mental health issues. Students who seek out mental healthcare through the university often have to wait for a period of time of up to a month before university health services can fit them in the schedule due to a high demand for these services. Increased funding for university mental health services could help alleviate this issue by allowing universities to hire more mental health providers to keep up with demand.

“The Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP) has been successful in helping countless veterans since its creation, but they have been limited by being severely understaffed. Additional staffing would undoubtedly mean that more veterans get access to the services they need. Without funding additional staffing, we are missing out on an important opportunity to help our veterans through these difficult times.

“Thank you to Rep. Dianne Hesselbein, Rep. Sondy Pope, and Rep. Daniel Riemer for partnering with the Democratic members of the Assembly Committee on Mental Health on these bills. It’s time to invest in the health and wellbeing of Wisconsinites. Mental healthcare is healthcare, and we should treat it as such.”

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