

SUICIDE

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"Humans are wired to be social, being isolated and bullied is really dangerous," he said. "Being bullied and isolated chips away after a while and turns into social pain."

Caulkins prefers a holistic approach that combines therapy and medications with community supports such as religion, sports, or even the local VWV.

Dr. Ronald Burd, a psychiatrist at Perham Health, said when a patient or family member is concerned over someone's mental health, the church and primary care doctors are a good



Burd

quality of my life?" he said. "When the trajectory of emotional life has changed, that's the point you go in and get help."

Biding time is critical in saving the life of someone who is suicidal, according to Caulkins.

"The first thing to do is stop someone's access," Caulkins said. "Time is your friend, it happens in flows."

Fresonke said it's sad people have to get to the point of committing or

starting point. "It should be the norm to get help, just like they do with heart disease or anything else," she said. Mental Health First Aid is a training program Perham Health is using to engage everyday people as it addresses this mental health crisis.

"If somebody all of a sudden develops chest pain and is having a heart attack, you know to call 911," Fresonke said. "Somebody could be having a mental health crisis right in front of you, but they don't know what's happening or what to do."

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-273-8255

MEET PERHAM'S NEWEST MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER

Psychiatrist Dr. Ronald Burd is joining the Perham Health team from Sanford Medical Center in Fargo, ND. Burd has recently worked inpatient and day treatment, but his practice in Perham will mostly be outpatient. Burd said it won't be hard transitioning to Perham because of the well-developed medical community that's already established here.

"Perham's not that small, and Fargo's not that big," he said. "They're both fairly sophisticated and diverse communities."

In general, Burd says it's currently a very exciting time to be a psychiatrist, citing new treatments and a greater understanding of how the

brain is wired and responds to different traumas.

"We're seeing changes we hoped to see 25 years ago finally happening," he said. Many conditions including depression and schizophrenia are the same as they've always been, but Burd said there's been a shift in what he sees in chemical dependency.

"It used to be exclusively alcohol," he said. "Now it's meth, opioids and even cannabis."

Burd has also seen more of a negative impact of bullying along with abuse and trauma, saying the overall social fabric has changed. "That's one of the areas where Perham is a better place," he said. "People have family around, belong to churches, business is stable. The ag economy is not what it used to be, but social fabric is well-

maintained." On top of general psychiatry, Burd also specializes in Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT). While there is a stigma associated with ECT, those are based on early forms of treatment. Now Burd compares it to a colonoscopy.

"You go in, we use anesthesia, do treatment, you wake up and go back home."

Rather than being a last resort, ECT is an alternative treatment that can work quicker than medication alone.

Dr. Burd is also interested in understanding dementia. "It's an interesting thing. We've been able to make the diagnosis, but there's not a darn thing we can do about it," he said.

Gun control measures advance in Minnesota House spending bill, Senate GOP says they're 'dead'

By Dana Ferguson
Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota House of Representatives in the early hours of Tuesday, April 30, voted to advance a pair of gun control proposals as part of a larger public safety and spending bill.

On a 70-64 vote, lawmakers advanced the larger bill, which will face opposition in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Supporters said the measures were needed to reduce instances of gun violence in the state while opponents said the measures went too far in infringing on Minnesotans' right to bear arms.

One of the measures would require background checks at the point of purchase of a pistol or semiautomatic military-style assault weapon. The other so-called "red flag" measure would allow a law enforcement officer or county attorney to request that the court remove a person's firearms if they are believed to pose a threat to themselves or to others.

"We have an epidemic of gun death in our country," Rep. Dave Pinto, DFL-St. Paul, said. "We can address that epidemic and at the same time protect those responsible gun owners."

Republican lawmakers tried and failed to amend the bill to allow that Minnesotans could carry a

gun without a permit, authorize self-defense with a firearm against a perceived threat of imminent death or bodily harm and require background checks at the point of purchase for a firearm for those with a criminal record.

"These bills are not going to do that, they're not going to get rid of gun violence," Rep. Peggy Bennett, R-Albert Lea, said. "What they are going to do is get rid of due process."

GOP lawmakers succeeded in amending the proposal to study where those unauthorized to possess firearms obtained them.

The debate came hours after legislative leaders in the nation's only divided Legislature dug in on the proposals.

House Speaker Melissa Hortman, DFL-Brooklyn Park, rallied with gun control supporters Monday morning and said the measure would pass in the House, despite opposition from some in her caucus. Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, R-Nisswa, meanwhile, said the bills would be "dead" in the Senate.

The move to add the proposals to the House DFL's public safety and judiciary spending proposal came after Gazelka said the proposals won't pass separately in the Minnesota Senate. The GOP leader last month said he'd hold hearings on the bills if the House

passed them off the floor but they would've faced a difficult path in the Republican-controlled Senate.

In an effort to ensure Gazelka didn't "stomp" them out, Hortman said she added them to the public safety spending bill and was prepared to prioritize them in end-of-session budget talks.

"We are bringing this to negotiations and I plan to fight for these provisions until the very last days," Hortman said.

Gazelka told reporters that the measures would sink in the Senate. "We're just not going to do it," Gazelka said. "The bills are dead."

Other spending bill components:

► If approved, the bill would allow felons to vote after they've completed their prison sentences.

► It would ban private prisons in Minnesota.

► It would create a task force to consider legalizing marijuana for recreational use.

► The bill revises the state sexual assault laws and sets up a task force to review them.

► And the proposal would boost funding for correctional officers.

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