

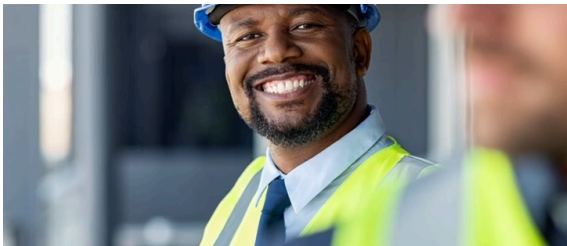
LOCAL NEWS

# New York enacts warning labels on social media features to combat teen mental health crisis

New York enacts legislation mandating warning labels on social media to combat youth mental health issues. This aims to curb dependency and promote awareness.

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BUFFALO, N.Y. — Governor Kathy Hochul and New York State lawmakers are taking aim at social media features, they say are causing a youth mental health crisis.

Newly signed legislation requires warning labels on social media platforms that use features like infinite scroll, autoplay, and addictive feeds. They appear when a user first encounters the feature and again after continued use.

State leaders point to studies showing teens who spend more than three hours a day on social media face double the risk of anxiety and depression.

These new warnings cannot be skipped and are designed to make young users pause and consider the impact on their mental health. Supporters compare the move to warning labels already required on tobacco, alcohol, and certain food products, calling it a public health step, not a ban.

"I think some of those features are designed with addiction in mind...." said Professor Amanda Nickerson, director at Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention at UB. She argues social media is designed to keep younger people engaged longer. Nickerson notes, "Same thing with algorithms that will show them certain content features that may be targeting issues that they are insecure about, like idealized images of beauty and things like that."

Professor Nickerson also points out that education may be just as important as regulation. She says, "We're actually doing this in a local school, where we're actually teaching people more about healthy balance and when to notice when there's an issue and how to actually detect when there's an algorithm, and privacy settings where we're actually giving people more of the skills that they need instead of just a pop-up message that they could ignore."





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