



March 7, 2017

The Honorable Jim Beall
State Capitol, Room 2082
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 651-4915

RE: SB 191 (Beall): Pupil health: Mental health and substance use disorder services
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senator Beall:

I am writing on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, to let you know that we strongly support your proposed legislation SB 191 (Beall). This legislation would create “multi-tiered systems of support” (MTSS) programs in schools to provide mental health and substance use prevention and early intervention services.

About 700,000 California schoolchildren have a serious behavioral health disorder, but many go untreated or receive inadequate treatment. This in turn has the effect of magnifying the effects of students’ mental health and substance abuse disorders, which themselves often result from ongoing or childhood trauma. Trauma is best addressed as early as possible to combat its often-lifelong consequences for children’s mental and physical health; so-called multi-tiered systems of support, or MTSS programs, have been shown to be highly effective in addressing the legacy of trauma in students and reducing the incidence of mental health and substance abuse problems. However, few school sites offer these programs, despite their efficacy and cost efficiency.

SB 191 (Beall) would help children and adolescents who have suffered trauma get the help they need by creating MTSS programs in California schools. This would provide tremendous benefits to the children who receive services through MTSS programs and would help to reduce the impact of mental illness, substance abuse, and childhood trauma among schoolchildren and in our state at large.

Pediatricians across the state support SB 191 (Beall). We thank you for your leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of a representative of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California.

Zoey Goore, M.D., M.P.H., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Executive Board Member, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

CC: Kris Calvin, CEO; AAP-CA Leadership; Lydia Bourne