



April 3, 2019

Connie M. Leyva, Chair
 Senate Committee on Education
State Capitol, Room 4061,
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 660 (Pan): Mental Health Counselors: Colleges
AAP-CA: SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Leyva:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians statewide, supports SB 660 (Pan) to require the California State University (CSU), Board of Trustees, Board of Governors (BOG) of the California Community College (CCC) and request the Regents of the University of California (UC) to have one full-time equivalent mental health counselor per 1,500 students enrolled at each of their respective campuses.

It has been reported that nearly 73% of students experience some sort of mental health crisis during college, and the demand for mental health services has grown at five times the rate as average student enrolment. Some students arrive with pre-existing or newly diagnosed conditions; approximately 50 percent of psychiatric disorders begin by age 14 and over 75 percent arise by age 25. Others experience anxiety, depression, homesickness, and issues brought on by the intensity of the college experience. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students claiming more than 1,100 lives every year nationally. These issues may be more acute for students of color.

There are many barriers to seeking help: stigmatization of mental health disorders, financial hardships, and immigration status. School-based mental health services can address these concerns by removing barriers to accessing services and providing prevention efforts as well as intervention strategies, but only if sufficient services are provided. SB 660 (Pan) seeks to ensure provision of mental health services for students by requiring each campus to meet the standard of one counselor to every 1,500 students and by establishing a system-wide reporting requirement to assess mental health on campus.

Pediatricians across the state respectfully urge your AYE vote on SB 660 (Pan). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA leadership, Weston Tountas AAP-CA Legislative Writer & Policy Analyst