

April 2, 2019

Assemblymember Jim Wood, Chair
Committee on Health
State Capitol, Room 6005
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 1689 (McCarty) College Mental Health
AAP-CA Position: Support

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members statewide, strongly supports proposed legislation AB 1689 (McCarty). Upon appropriation by the legislature, this bill would allocate funds from the Mental Health Services Act to award grants to college campuses in California to provide much needed mental health services for their students.

According to survey data compiled by the American College Health Association, last year three out of five college students in the US experienced overwhelming anxiety, and two out of five students felt they were too depressed to function.

Not only can mental illness have an impact on students' academic pursuits, but it can also pose a threat of bodily harm. Rates of suicidal behavior and hospitalizations for mental illness among college students have increased over the last decade. Currently, one student in twelve has a suicide plan.

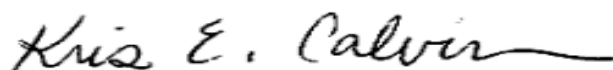
Despite the high rates of depression and other mental illnesses on campuses today, less than a fifth of students receive treatment from campus counseling centers. This is, in part, due to the fact that the number of students seeking mental health resources has grown substantially over the last decade, outpacing the rate of enrollment. College enrollment in the U.S. grew by under six percent between 2009 and 2015, while the number of students seeking mental health services increased by almost thirty percent in the same period. This increase contributes to long wait times for services, as well as limits the ability for colleges to identify at-risk students.

AB 1689 (McCarty) would provide the funds to ensure that California is able to meet the increased demand for mental health services on campus and expand resources for college students in our state.

Pediatricians across the state respectfully urge your AYE vote on AB1689 (McCarty).

Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being 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