

May 26, 2019

Senator Richard Pan
State Capitol, Room 5114
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 428 (Pan): Pupil health: school employee training: youth mental health first aid.
As amended May 17, 2019.
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Pan:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 428 that would, contingent upon an appropriation made for these purposes require each local educational agency that serves pupils in any of grades 7 to 12, inclusive, as defined, on or before January 1, 2023, to certify to the department that a specified minimum number of classified employees and certificated employees having direct contact with pupils at each school site receive evidence-based youth mental health first aid training, as identified by the department.

According to the California Health Care Foundation, the number of teens reporting a major depressive incident increased by more than a third between the 2011-12 and the 2014-15 school years, while California's youth suicide rate rose nearly 15% between 2007-09 and 2013-15. One California pediatric resident shared with our leadership that in each of their 10 hours shifts training in the emergency department they saw an average of 10 youth with either suicidal ideation or a suicide attempt.

We must take action to address this crisis of mental health needs among our youth. Their attendance at middle school and high school provides a unique opportunity for assessment and referral, provided that there are staff present that have been appropriately trained to do so. SB 428 would improve teen's access to lifesaving mental health care by requiring that a certain number of school staff be trained in mental health first aid. Evidence-based training would give school staff skills to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness or substance abuse, including the knowledge needed to refer students to other sources of support that may be able to provide more specialized assistance.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support SB 428.

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; AAPCA Advocate Lydia Bourne

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California is the state-level advocacy organization of the four AAP California Chapters. Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of all children and youth in California and to support the professional needs of our California Chapter member pediatricians. We are a 501(c)4 nonprofit legally incorporated in California.