



ADVANCING
MENTAL HEALTH
POLICY &
INSPIRING
LEADERSHIP



June 1, 2017

The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Co-Chair
The Honorable Phil Ting, Co-Chair
Joint Legislative Conference Committee on Budget
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Funding for Mental Health Services on College Campuses

Dear Senator Mitchell and Assemblymember Ting:

On behalf of the California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies, Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, National Association of Social Workers, Steinberg Institute, and Student Senate for California Community Colleges, we urge your support for the Assembly budget proposal to provide ongoing funding from the Mental Health Services Act administrative fund to increase mental health services on college campuses.

Specifically, the action taken in the Assembly provides:

- \$10 million ongoing from the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) administration funding to community colleges to support increased mental health services on campuses including matching funds from the colleges;
- \$5 million ongoing Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) administration funding to UC to increase mental health services for students including a one-to-one match; and
- \$5 million ongoing Mental Health Services Act Administration funding to CSU to increase mental health services for students with a required one-to-one match.

Suicide remains a prevalent — and yet preventable — plague on California's college campuses. In our public colleges alone we lose nearly 200 students each year to suicide. That means 200 lives cut short, 200 families forever changed, and thousands of campus communities left wondering, how could this have happened?

Research shows that investments in college student mental health in California results in impressive positive outcomes including improved student wellness, increased graduation rates, and a return of investment of at least \$6 and up to \$11 for every \$1 committed. This funding has the potential to create these kinds of outcomes for tens of thousands of college students.

Recent reports—along with the stories shared by college students, their families, faculty, and staff—show a serious and significant increase in the rates of mental health needs among college-aged youth. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. Currently, suicide rates are at a 30 year high, with significant increases annually since 2006. Of the 440 deaths by suicide of youth aged 15-24 reported in California in 2010, the costs associated with these deaths for medical care and lost earnings reaches over \$876 million. These costs average out to nearly \$2 million per individual lost to a preventable death.

Currently, California college campuses and higher education systems do not meet national staffing standards for psychiatric services and other mental health professionals.

Access to mental health services on public college campuses varies by systems, with some offering direct access to services and others with no mental health professional on campus. Considering the growing number of students seeking counseling, there is even more needed to support effective services, such as peer-to-peer programs, and community and intra-campus engagement.

With 113 CCC, 23 CSU, and 10 UC campuses, totaling nearly 2.8 million students, there is both a challenge and an opportunity to meet their mental health needs collaboratively. The lack of timely access to mental health services, inequitable and inefficient care, and unsafe conditions must change.

California students face unique challenges and it is time we provide them with the resources they need to succeed. Thank you for your support on this critical matter.

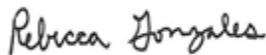
Sincerely,



Paul Curtis
Executive Director
California Council of Community
Behavioral Health Agencies



Austin J Webster
External Affairs Director
Faculty Association of
California Community Colleges



Rebecca Gonzalez
Government Relations Director
National Association of Social Workers



Adrienne Shilton
Government Affairs Director
Steinberg Institute

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney J. Cooper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop under the "y" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Courtney Cooper
President
Student Senate for California Community Colleges

CC: The Honorable Anthony Rendon
The Honorable Kevin de Leon
Joint Legislative Conference Committee on Budget