



September 17, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 14 (Portantino) Dependent parent health care coverage – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I respectfully request your signature on SB 14 (Portantino).

COVID-19 has increased feelings of isolation and loneliness and exacerbated California's youth mental health crisis. We need to ensure that members of our schools and communities are equipped with the skills and knowledge to recognize and respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use. Under existing law, the California Department of Education is not required to identify an evidence-based mental health training program for local educational agencies to use to train teachers and other school personnel who have direct, daily contact with pupils. Furthermore, although physical health challenges merit excused absences, mental and behavioral health challenges are not considered sufficient grounds to excuse absences for K-12 pupils.

SB 14 would require the California Department of Education to identify an evidence-based training program for a local educational agency to use to train classified and certificated school employees having direct contact with pupils in youth mental and behavioral health.

The bill will permit 7-12th grade students to receive training on the signs and symptoms of a behavioral health disorder. It will ensure that youth absences from school for a mental health issue or appointment will be an excused absence in the same fashion absences for physical health ailments or appointments are treated.

For these reasons, the California State Association of Psychiatrists is pleased to support AB 570 (Santiago) and respectfully requests your signature on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yoder', is placed below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Paul J. Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Senator Anthony Portantino