



April 5, 2023

The Honorable Chris Holden  
Chairman, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite 5650  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 456 (Maienschein) Public postsecondary education: campus mental health hotlines – Support**

Dear Chairman Holden,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write to you in support of AB 456, which would require California State University (CSU) and California Community Colleges (CCC) campuses and request University of California (UC) campuses to establish a campus mental health hotline, if one does not already exist, for students to access mental health services remotely.

With the academic and economic burdens of higher education, college students face an overwhelming amount of pressure and struggle with a variety of mental health issues. These mental health struggles have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and now more than ever it is imperative that we support students not only through academic development, but by also offering the necessary resources needed to deal with any burdens they may face. Therefore, the presence of mental health hotlines in all higher education institutions would help lessen the burden and would increase access to mental health services for students.

Currently, 13 of the 23 CSU campuses have campus mental health hotlines, 9 of the 10 UC campuses have campus mental health hotlines, and it is presently unclear if any of the 116 CCC campuses have campus mental health hotlines. These numbers show that more focus should be dedicated towards the establishment of mental health hotlines in higher education institutions to provide more access and help more students deal with mental health crises. In order to supplement the on campus mental health services and reduce wait times, or to help deal with the absence of mental health services on campus, AB 456 would require and request universities establish a hotline and/or mental health center to provide resources and support for students during times of crisis.

More specifically AB 456 would ensure all higher education institutions have a mental health hotline that shall operate during working hours as established by the university and should direct students to a licensed mental health therapist, peer mental health trained support staff, and/or a psychiatrist. Outside of normal operating hours, the hotline can direct the caller to an offline campus service, local or national 24/7 hotline numbers or to 911 in some cases. Lastly, if a verbal hotline cannot be established, phone and text hotlines can substitute as placements.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support AB 456.

Sincerely,

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

Paul Yoder  
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee