



April 4, 2023

The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman
Chairwoman, Senate Health Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8530
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 11 (Menjivar) California State University: mental health counseling – Support as amended March 22, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Eggman,

On behalf of the California State Association of Psychiatrists (CSAP), I write in support of SB 11, which would require the California State University (CSU) to reduce the ratio of mental health counselors to 1 full-time equivalent mental health counselor per 1,500 students. SB 11 would also establish a systemwide telehealth mental health service to provide students on each CSU campus with 24/7 mental health counseling, phase-out contracts with out-of-state mental health providers as appropriate, and provide incentives for CSU students to become mental health counselors.

It is estimated that the ratio of counselors to students within the CSU system is 1:2,176. That is to say, the current ratio of counselor-to-student on some CSU campuses is woefully inadequate and has led to excessive wait times for students to see a counselor – estimated to range from between 4-8 weeks. If students are excessively waiting for services, it discourages them from seeking counseling and increases the chances of them leaving the university. Further, delays in treatment could also present difficulties in providing services to students experiencing increasingly more severe psychological issues that negatively impact their academic success.

Among the many benefits of mental health counseling are lower college dropout rates and improved academic performance. SB 11 will help resolve these issues by giving timely access to high-quality mental health services and highly qualified counselors who understand the students they serve. In addition, it will establish a minimum of one full-time mental health counselor per 1,500 students; end contracting out of telehealth mental health service providers by 2026 with revised requirements to meet CSU standards during the phase-out period; create a telehealth mental health counseling program within the CSU by 2026 to provide 24/7 mental health counseling by trained and licensed counselors employed by the CSU; and lastly, help to incentivize CSU students to become mental health counselors in the state.

For these reasons, CSAP is pleased to support SB 11.

Sincerely,

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

Paul Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Members, Senate Education Committee
Senator Caroline Menjivar