

Lane County Medical Society

990 West 7th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97402
(541) 686-0995 || (541) 687-1554

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Representative Mitch Greenlick
Chair, House Health Care Committee
900 Court St. NE, H-493
Salem, Oregon 97301
VIA E-mail to hhc.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Chair Greenlick and Members of the House Health Care Committee,

I write to you in support of HB 2408, which would provide financial support for School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs), mental health supports for students in public schools, and support trauma-informed approaches to education. This bill takes some important steps towards breaking down the walls between the “silos” of education and healthcare. We know that our public school teachers do an exceptional job with children who arrive to school healthy and ready to learn, but far too many children arrive to school suffering from poor physical or mental health, often from a history of trauma.

SBHCs provide a cost-effectiveⁱ way of delivering healthcare to children. They can serve as a critical gateway to immunizationsⁱⁱ, dental sealantsⁱⁱⁱ, and other preventive services that help kids stay healthy. Incorporating mental health services in SBHCs or through traditional school counselors allows kids to address the trauma in their lives^{iv}. Finally, we can educators address the needs of students by offering appropriate training in the impact of trauma^v.

Locally, we have seen how budgetary pressures force school districts to prioritize all direct education services, while decreasing supportive services that make their educational efforts more successful. Medicaid expansion has helped us make great leaps in physical and mental health coverage for children. However, there’s a missing bridge between health services in the community and educational services in the schools. Eugene School District 4J had to close most of its SBHCs a few years ago, and laid off most of its school counselors around the same time. They quickly realized that they had to reinstate some of the counselors, even if it meant fewer teachers.

The Lane County Medical Society supports HB 2408. We encourage you to do the same.

Sincerely,



Marshall L. Wilde
Executive Director

ⁱ Ran, T., Chattopadhyay, S. K., Hahn, R. A., & Community Preventive Services Task Force. (2016). Economic evaluation of school-based health centers: a Community Guide systematic review. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 51(1), 129-138.

ⁱⁱ Bernstein, H. H., Bocchini, J. A., & Committee on Infectious Diseases. (2017). Practical approaches to optimize adolescent immunization. *Pediatrics*, e20164187.

ⁱⁱⁱ Griffin, S., Naavaal, S., Scherrer, C., Griffin, P. M., Harris, K., & Chattopadhyay, S. (2016). School-Based Dental Sealant Programs Prevent Cavities And Are Cost-Effective. *Health Affairs*, 35(12), 2233-2240.

^{iv} Larson, S. (2016). School-based Health Centers: A Model of Care to Meet the Behavioral and Mental Health Needs of Children and Adolescents (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, San Francisco).

^v Crosby, S. D. (2016). Evaluating Trauma-Informed Educational Practices With Trauma-Exposed, Female Students (Doctoral Dissertation, Wayne State University).