

Submitter: Caroline Bleckmann
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2729

Dear Chair Neron and Members of the Committee:

My name is Caroline Bleckmann, and I am the School Social Worker at Benson Polytechnic High School.

Part of my role involves working in our School-Based Health Center to coordinate communication and services for our students.

I'm writing in support of HB 2729, which provides critical resources that youth and families across Oregon need now. Oregon is ranked 49th in the nation for youth mental

health, and it's showing in our schools through rampant behavior issues and high rates

of chronic absenteeism. HB 2729 provides evidence-based resources that will be quickly available for schools to support youth mental and physical health. A study conducted in Oregon found that youth are 10-21x more likely to seek mental health support at a school-based health center (SBHC) and that SBHCs that increased mental

health capacity were 12% less likely to report a depressive episode; 16% less likely to

report suicidal ideation; and 18% less likely to report a suicide attempt.

support this bill because we are sometimes the best, if not only, access to healthcare for our students. Especially with how hard it can be for students to access primary care in their communities, we fill that gap. We prevent absenteeism because students can get in for their appointments, and then get right back to class.

Our youth need this now and these resources will allow for an immediate increase in our capacity to support them. I urge you to vote yes on HB 2729."

Sincerely, Caroline Bleckmann