



## Mental Health Services for Students Act

### **ISSUE:**

**Approximately one in five youth experience some type of mental health disorder** that can cause significant challenges at home, school, and in their community. **Yet, only 10 percent of U.S. children and adolescents ages 3 to 17-years-old receive any treatment or counseling from a mental health professional.**

### **BACKGROUND:**

**Early interventions are critical for successful mental health treatment.** Schools are an important setting to help identify mental health problems early. Schools also can be a crucial provider of mental health services for students, especially in rural communities, where resources are scarce. **The need for school-based mental health services has never been greater.** For example, **by the end of high school, one student in five will have experienced an episode of depression.** With early identification and treatment, mental health disorders can be addressed before significant impairment occurs. **If left untreated, these disorders can lead to academic failure, family conflicts, substance use, and even suicide.**

### **SOLUTION: The “Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019”**

School administrators, teachers and other staff need support to respond appropriately to the mental health needs of their students. The “*Mental Health Services for Students Act*” would help to address these needs by providing up to **\$2 million in new grant funding for each of five years to revise, increase, and expand SAMHSA’s existing Project AWARE State Educational Grant Program for mental health services in 100 school systems.** These increased grants would help schools provide much-needed on-site, comprehensive school-based, mental health services for students. These grants would be used to:

- Help schools partner with community mental health professionals, including child and adolescent psychiatrists, to provide on-site behavioral and mental health services for K-12 students that is trauma-informed and evidence-based;
- Provide appropriate professional development to school personnel to help recognize the early signs of mental or behavioral health issues;
- Help local communities develop policies to assist students in dealing with trauma and violence; and
- Establish mechanisms for children and adolescents to report incidents of violence or plans by other children, adolescents, or adults to commit violence.

**Education is the foundation for a healthy future. Schools need more support to address the mental health needs of students. This bill is an essential step in that direction.**

### **CONGRESSIONAL ASK:**

- Please co-sponsor and advance H.R. 1109 and S. 1122, The “*Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019*,” as introduced by Reps. Grace Napolitano (D-CA) and John Katko (R-NY), and Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN).