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**Governor Vetoes Mental Health Bill Endorsed by More Than 250 Groups Representing Students, Teachers, Healthcare Professionals, and Community Organizations**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – Yesterday, Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed SB 428, after it was passed by both the California Assembly and the Senate with unanimous bipartisan support. Advocates are disappointed that the Governor did not sign a bill that would have brought our schools much needed capacity to deal with mental health and substance use situations. If passed, the bill would have required ten percent of staff and ten percent of teachers in each California school to be trained in a program like Youth Mental Health First Aid. Last year, Governor Newsom ran on a campaign promise “to train our teachers, counselors, first responders and pediatricians in how [to recognize early signs of mental illness.](#)”

This bill was introduced at a crucial time for our state. California is in the midst of a youth mental health crisis. Depression symptoms are at an all-time high for high school students. Nearly 1 in 3 California high schoolers reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row, so much so that they stopped doing some of their usual activities. Nearly 1 in 5 reported that they have seriously considered attempting suicide.<sup>1</sup> Teachers are on the frontlines of this crisis and often lack the knowledge and skills it takes to identify and help students who are suffering.

SB 428 was supported by a broad coalition led by California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA), County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), Children Now, and Born This Way Foundation. Following the Assembly’s action, Le Ondra Clark Harvey, a spokesperson for the coalition and Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for CBHA said:

“Our coalition came together because we recognized the urgent need to implement strong, preventative measures at scale. Schools are the perfect place to start building capacity in the community to recognize and respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use. We are disappointed in Governor Newsom’s decision not to sign SB 428,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/facts-and-stats/national-and-state-data-sheets/adolescent-mental-health-fact-sheets/california/index.html>



a bill that was passed through both houses of our state Legislature unanimously. Making sure teachers and school staff are trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid is not just good policy, but as we heard from one mother, it could be [the difference between life and death.](#)"

From SB 428's lead author and legislative champion, Senator Richard Pan:

"Our youth are suffering a major crisis as depression and suicide rates have risen over 60% over the past decade. With the veto of SB428, I am disappointed at this missed opportunity to help them at school and likely save lives," said Dr. Richard Pan, "Our youth urgently need our support, and I will continue to partner with our teachers and school staff at the front lines of our school and mental health advocates to make available training and support to teachers and school staff so they can help the many youth struggling with mental health issues attending their schools."

Youth Mental Health First Aid is a comprehensive training specifically designed to equip educators, family members, and caregivers with the skills and knowledge to identify, understand, and respond to the signs or risk factors of mental illness and substance use disorders in youth. SB 428 would have increased school and community-level capacity to tackle California's growing youth mental health crisis.

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#### [California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies](#)

CBHA is a statewide association of mental health and substance use disorder non-profit community agencies. We believe that Californians deserve a comprehensive, community-based behavioral health system that is adequately funded. We value outcome based, data driven, and culturally responsive approaches to service provision. We work strategically and collaboratively to pursue public policy initiatives that create system change for communities across our state. We support the integration of behavioral health, physical health, housing, education, and vocational rehabilitation services for children, youth, adults, and older adults.

The [County Behavioral Health Directors Association](#) is a statewide non-profit association that represents all 58 county behavioral health directors and 2 city mental health programs (Berkeley and Tri-City) which is dedicated to advocating for public policy and services on behalf of people who are living with substance use disorders and mental illness.

Led by Lady Gaga and her mother Cynthia Germanotta, [Born This Way Foundation](#) was founded in 2012 to support the wellness of young people and empower them to create a kinder and braver world. To achieve these goals, the Foundation leverages evidence-based programming



and authentic partnerships in order to provide young people with improved mental health resources and kinder communities - online and offline.

[Children Now](#) is a non-partisan, whole-child research, policy development and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting children's health and education in California. The organization also leads [The Children's Movement of California](#), a network of more than 3,000 direct service, parent, civil rights, faith-based and community groups dedicated to improving children's well-being.