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California State Senate

SENATOR
JIM BEALL

FIFTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



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SUBCOMMITTEE
BUDGET AND FISCAL
REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE #5
ON CORRECTIONS,
PUBLIC SAFETY, AND
THE JUDICIARY

November 16, 2017

Chair Tina Wooton
Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
1325 J Street, Suite 1700
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Letter for the Record, November 16th MHSOAC Meeting

Dear Ms. Wooton:

In the Commission record, please reflect my strong support of today's action to bolster funding for school mental health partnerships. This is consistent with the efforts previously taken by the Commission as well as the legislative action taken last year via my bills, SB 1113 and SB 191.

Schools are one of the most effective access points for children's mental health services, yet they are significantly underutilized. Outcomes for programs such as the Early Mental Health Initiative, previously funded by the state Department of Mental Health, show the majority of students who receive prevention and early intervention services avoid entering special education, a much more costly system. Additionally, the upfront investment to implement school partnerships is dwarfed by the potential additional federal Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) revenue. Local Educational Agencies cannot access EPSDT funding for the services unless they contract with their respective counties or a qualified provider operating in the county mental health plan network. The bottom line is California is leaving tens of millions of federal dollars on the table.

The Commission has an opportunity to ensure SB 82 funds be allocated fairly to increase the number of opportunities children have to school based mental health programs, in addition to the services provided to adults with these monies. By focusing financial resources on the front end of mental health services for youth, counties and the state will benefit with improved educational and health outcomes for children, while simultaneously reducing our overreliance on the criminal justice system to treat children in crisis.

As the Senate designated appointee to the Commission, I intend to introduce legislation that continues our work to increase funding for school partnerships and youth programs that have proven outcomes. I respectfully request your support on my forthcoming legislation.

If you have any questions, please contact Gregory Cramer of my staff at 916-651-4015.

Sincerely,


JIM BEALL
Senator, 15th District

cc: Members, Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León
Senate Committee on Budget