



## HOSA Background

**HOSA: Future Health Professionals** is a global student-led organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and several federal and state agencies. The mission of HOSA is to empower HOSA-Future Health Professionals to become leaders in the global health community through education, collaboration, and experience. HOSA actively promotes career opportunities in the health industry to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people. HOSA's goal is to encourage all health science instructors and students to unite and be actively involved in the health science education (HSE)-HOSA Partnership.

HOSA provides a unique program of leadership development, motivation, and recognition exclusively for secondary (middle and high schools), postsecondary, adult education, and collegiate students enrolled in HSE and biomedical science programs, or those who have interests in pursuing careers in health professions. HOSA is 100% health care!

Since its inception in 1976, HOSA (formerly known as Health Occupations Students of America) has grown steadily, reaching over 300,000 members through 59 chartered HOSA associations that include the U.S., American Samoa, Canada, China, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. HOSA is international! It is not a club to which a few students in school join. Rather, HOSA is an effective youth-driven instructional tool that works best when it is integrated into the HSE and health science-related curriculum and classroom. HSE instructors are committed to the development of the total person. Those who join the HSE-HOSA Partnership recognize the importance of providing students with training far beyond the basic technical skills needed for entry into the health care field. The rapidly changing health care system needs dedicated workers who, in addition to their technical skills, are people-oriented and capable of playing a leadership role as a member of a health care team.

International HOSA's mission is especially critical when considering the acute shortage of qualified workers for the

## Cal-HOSA's Mental Health Prevention and Early Identification/Intervention Consortium of Schools

health care industry. This shortage has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Spring of 2020 countless doctors and nurses returned to the front line out of retirement, and medical schools allowed students to graduate early to fight the pandemic. HOSA is a viable solution to health industry shortages. HOSA advisors globally are promoting the health professions and ensuring that future health professionals are prepared for college and their health profession of choice.

### California HOSA (Cal-HOSA): Future Health Professionals

For nearly 40 years, Cal-HOSA has served as a pathway for students interested in healthcare careers. Cal-HOSA also represents a place of belonging or a culture of inclusivity within schools that attracts students who have historically felt marginalized and excluded from school activities and community life in general.

Cal-HOSA has nearly 11,000 members and 230 chapters throughout California. Cal-HOSA is a "health science and medical technology curriculum strategy that is part of an instructional program that prepares students for healthcare careers" (Cal-HOSA, 2020). More information about Cal-HOSA is available on the organization's website (<https://www.cal-hosa.org/>).

Cal-HOSA is one of nine nationally recognized career and technical student organizations (CTSOs), and one of six CTOSs under leadership, oversight, and responsibility of the California Department of Education. Its main focus is on students enrolled in health science and medical technology education programs at the middle, secondary, and post-secondary levels. With an emphasis on students' personal, college, career, and leadership development, Cal-HOSA is an integral part of career technical education (CTE) and academic curriculum.

### Cal-HOSA Youth Leadership

Cal-HOSA provides a variety of leadership activities for students and educators. The following are examples of the types of activities currently being offered.

# Cal-HOSA's Mental Health Prevention and Early Identification/Intervention Consortium of Schools

- State Officer Program and Leadership Training – Student Officers
- Local Officer Leadership Training – Students
- Washington Leadership Conference – Students
- Advisor Training – CTE Teachers
- Fall Leadership Conference – CTE Teachers and Student
- Teacher Leadership Certification
- Competitive Event Program
  - Regional Competitive Event
  - State Leadership Conference
  - International Leadership Conference
- Community Service Projects
  - Mental Health Wellness (Early Identification and Prevention)
  - Workforce Pipeline

## Cal-HOSA's Special Project – Prevention Early Intervention/Identification Project

In 2018, Cal-HOSA launched its mental health prevention and early intervention project for educators. This project is a mental healthcare framework to recognize the risk factors associated with health and mental health issues, and suicide ideation among youths and young adults. The project's aim was to guide schools with a Cal-HOSA chapter to develop a series of action plans that would focus on early identification, early prevention, and early intervention within the CTE sector.

In 2020, Cal-HOSA was awarded, through a competitive process, a Kaiser Permanente Southern California Regional Community Health: Mental Health and Wellness Strategic Partnership Grant with a focus on building youth resilience and a future workforce pipeline from middle school, to high school, to college, and promote careers in mental/behavioral health.

To date, the Prevention Early Identification/Intervention Project has grown from 10 schools to more than 20 schools. At the national level, HOSA worked closely with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to approve the very first in California and

internationally Mental Health HOSA Competitive Event for the 2021 International HOSA Leadership Conference. In 2021, Cal-HOSA started working with other states to implement the Prevention Early Intervention/Identification Project and pilot test its competitive event.

With its **Mental Health Prevention and Early Intervention Consortium of more than 20 Schools**, Cal-HOSA seeks to build, implement, evaluate, and fine-tune evidence-based practices and programs to: (1) increase awareness of the risk factors associated with mental illness; (2) reduce the barriers that prevent children and families from accessing resources to succeed in school and community life; and (3) reduce the negative outcomes resulting from mental health needs not adequately met (e.g., substance use, school failure and dropout, poverty, homelessness, incarceration, suicide). Early detection combined with appropriate services and resources can change a child's trajectory from a path of severe mental health issues to one of wellness and full participation in school and community life (e.g., participation in workforce, successful relationships, and prolonged social and economic prosperity). Cal-HOSA and its consortium of schools have implemented programs to: (1) identify mental health risk factors and needs of their student population; (2) equip school academic and career technical educators with the knowledge to recognize and appropriately respond to unmet needs; (3) engage community partners to support their school district's prevention and early intervention (PEI) efforts; (4) connect with families and involve them in designing strategies that are best suited for their cultural and linguistic needs; and (5) work with school districts to ensure that schools are equipped with on-campus resources to address mental health needs and integrate strategies into curricula. This project also will strengthen youths' interests in careers and college readiness in the mental health field.

In 2020 Cal-HOSA produced two studies showing both quantitative and qualitative results from data collected from Cal-HOSA students in the Mental Health Prevention Early Identification Project. These studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the project and outline the key characteristics linked to strategies and solutions that schools can adapt and implement to improve the mental wellness of youths and interest them in careers in mental/behavioral health.