

Good evening-

I support HB 181 and the addition of mental health curriculum to K-12 Health classrooms. We in Alaska have our fair share of mental health struggles and by talking to kids early about both their physical and mental health, we are normalizing getting assistance and will proactively help students understand and be able to support their own positive mental health.

At the same time, I leery of schools being the panacea for all social ills. I would strongly support partnering with mental health agencies and providing adequate funding for health services so that people are able to access mental health services when needed.

HB 181 is a good start towards this.

Thank you for your time,
Sara Dykstra
Anchorage, AK

Greetings!

I am requesting that you amend the existing health education curriculum statute to include mental health curriculum in all K-12 health classrooms. Any persons mental health is a natural part of who we are as people, not separate of our cognitive functions and therefore needs guidance for learning about how to foster it just the same. I was very impressed with one of the high school programs I learned about on the Line One radio program that had as guests two teenaged high school students. They were part of a team that serves as peer support to other students who may have mental health concerns which seems to have a positive impact and may even help in cases where students may be considering suicide. Teaching about mental health should be a natural part of any learning curriculum.

Thank you,
Connie Markis

Hello,

My name is Holly Miller I live in district 20 and I support HB 181. I support this bill because I live with the mental health condition of Bipolar disorder. I first began experiencing symptoms in my early teen years, shortly after entering High School. Unfortunately, I often look back and felt the school system failed me in helping educate and guide me. I was suicidal many times and often ended up in the councilor's office or being sent home for cutting. I felt the whole notion of it was very hush hush and I did not feel like I could truly talk to anyone about it, despite the school assemblies and guest speakers. This was simply not enough. I personally believe if mental health is added within the current health class curriculum, it could have opened up different and new opportunities for students to create groups or readily reach out for help more than the current options. I was hospitalized at 17 and had 2 more hospitalizations preceding that one within the next 2 years. Education is knowledge and knowledge is power. Please support HB 181.

Thank you,
Holly Miller

Dear Alaska Legislators

2/17/20

I support HB 181 K-12 Mental Health Education for Alaska's K-12 Students.

Passing this bill is an important step in increasing awareness, decreasing stigma and helping our youth and their families find support and understanding for mental illness.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely

Laurie Tryck
P.O. Box 310
Girdwood, Alaska 99587
Email: momskialaska@gmail.com

Greetings,

I support HB 181

...and mental health means so much to me.

In high school I experienced many episodes of severe panic attacks. My initial thought was anything but a mental illness. did I have lime disease? bad circulation? diabetes? Am i experiencing a stroke? You see, my hands were tingling and numb right before I had a panic attack. that was my trigger. Something is wrong and it must be physical. I had no knowledge of mental illness and the symptoms except for what I saw on movies and tv, which never prints a favorable picture.

I want my daughter to know the signs of a mental illness and not to judge but to either get help for herself or a peer. I hope this bill will finally help with erasing the stigma placed on mental illness because mental health is health!

Thank you for your time.

Kate Yenik
Anchorage

Dear House Education Committee Members,

I have provided services for young people in Alaska for over a decade. During this time I have seen two teens I worked with directly take their lives. These young people may still be here today if they had sought help for their mental illness. Education is key to removing the stigma behind mental illness. By including mental health information in health classes, Alaska can make progress in addressing the staggering rate of suicide in this state. I support HB 181.

Thank you for considering my remarks.

Sincerely,
Karen Zeman