

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Alyse Galvin](#)
Subject: HB 105 - Mental Health in Education
Date: Saturday, March 15, 2025 12:52:45 PM

Members of the House,

Please support HB 105.

It is sad to acknowledge that such a bill is needed. It would be even sadder still if something could have been done to prevent a child from committing suicide or from experiencing the adverse health outcomes from untreated mental health issues. It is nice to suppose that these children could get the help they need from their parents or medical providers, but that is not always the case. In any event, it is important to take away the stigma of mental health issues.

The public school in which I taught for 20 years, was one of the first to have a full time counselor who provided biweekly social emotional lessons for every class and was also available for crisis intervention. Sadly, that position was reduced to part-time after I retired 11 years ago at a time when children started to need more, not less support.

While occasional lessons about mental health in a health class cannot replace that invaluable service, it is at least a step in the right direction. I therefore urge you to support HB 105.

Sincerely,
Irene Bortnick

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105 is needed in Alaska
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 4:45:05 AM

Dear Members of the House Education Committee:

I am writing as an Alaskan resident for over 38 years, as well as a mother and grandmother of Alaskans. Mental health education is an important component of health education in general. As I'm sure you are aware, Alaskan youth (ages 15-24) have over twice the national average of cases of self-harm and suicide. Providing mental health education in an age appropriate way (with parental consent and involvement), as part of the general health curriculum, could go a long way to addressing this.

This is not a mandate. It would provide a roadmap for local school districts who want to include mental health education while allowing local control. We all know how important early childhood education is for future success. Mental health education is part of that. Including it along with other health education, such as nutrition, dental health, etc. would remove the stigma and make it easier for those who need help to seek it out.

I have seen mental health challenges in my own family, and I believe mental health education would have helped. I urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,
Christine Everett

[REDACTED]
North Pole, AK 99705
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105 Support
Date: Monday, March 24, 2025 11:18:09 PM

Hello. I am writing to ask for your support of HB 105. I ask this as your constituent, but even more so as a mother and a grandmother.

I retired last year after over 28 years in public education. I have seen first hand how important mental health care and education are for all our kids. Unfortunately have also seen first hand that the resources in this area are lacking.

More than ever, and younger than ever, our kids face issues that are detrimental to their mental health. While we have made some gains toward destigmatizing mental health care - or even just talking about the issues - it is not enough. Our kids are experiencing self harm and suicide at alarming rates. Kids turn to drugs to escape or self medicate. And too often the adults in their lives cannot seem to help, either because of their own issues or lack of knowledge about these issues.

We can do better. We NEED to do better. Please support HB 105 and take a step in the right direction.

Thank you

Anna Stensland Petersen
[REDACTED]
Anchorage AK 99507

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105, Mental Health Education
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 8:35:33 AM

House Education Committee Members,

I support HB 105, mental health education in schools and applaud Alyse Galvin for introducing the bill.

The bill involves in the curriculum parents, teachers, mental health consultants... it's transparent and gives parents opportunities and understanding of the importance of mental health education along with physical education.

We grow up learning about how our bodies work but there was a quietness about mental health.

Prevention is so important. That's been proven health wise - diet, dental, exercise. Understanding and being informed about youth mental health is just as an important piece as diet and exercise. Our kids are so at risk, we use these words regularly. Maybe they just need to understand mental health, take it out of the closet.

You are hearing this bill this morning so I am late in writing. I urge you to pass it out of committee and if it comes to the floor, to vote for it. Please.

Therese Lewandowski

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 11:15:55 AM

Dear House Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 105, which aims to incorporate mental health education into Alaska's school curriculum. As an Alaskan deeply concerned about the well-being of our youth, I believe this bill is a crucial step towards addressing the mental health challenges faced by our young people.

The statistics are alarming: Alaskans aged 15-24 experience more than twice the national average of self-harm incidents and deaths by suicide. This bill provides an opportunity to reverse this trend by implementing age-appropriate mental health education and fostering family engagement.

HB 105 offers several key benefits:

It destigmatizes mental health discussions by integrating them into comprehensive health education alongside other essential topics.

The bill provides school districts with a clear framework for adopting mental health education while maintaining local control.

It addresses a critical educational gap, empowering students with knowledge to understand and manage their mental health effectively.

By promoting early awareness and support, HB 105 helps students recognize they are not alone and encourages them to seek help when needed.

Importantly, the bill ensures family involvement through communication and participation choices. This approach respects parental rights while addressing a pressing public health issue.

I urge you to support HB 105. This legislation is a vital investment in the future of Alaska's youth, providing them with the tools and knowledge necessary for lifelong mental wellness.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicholle Chandler, PCC, NBC-HWC

[Colebee Coaching](#)

Life & Well-Being Coach

Retail Buyer and Inventory Specialist

[YouMap® Coach](#) - Find yourself. Blaze your path. Show the world!

Nicholle Chandler, PCC, NBC-HWC, A-CFHC, PFAC, PN1-NC

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education; Alyse Galvin](#)
Subject: HB 105-Mental Health in Education
Date: Sunday, March 16, 2025 9:46:16 PM

Dear House Education Committee,

As an educator who supported positive mental health for students over 22 years, I strongly request you contribute toward passing HB 105.

Parents and families are a child's best and first teachers, but families often become overwhelmed when their children experience a mental health crisis.

Professional school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and some school nurses can be most helpful. These mental health experts work to provide social and emotional wellbeing for all children.

Most importantly, they are first responders trained to appropriately react to a child's thoughts, feelings and actions related to self-harm. They conduct nonjudgmental evaluations of risk. Followed by confidential collaboration with families and referrals to clinical support as needed.

These professionals also provide prevention techniques through skill building. They teach children how to:

- manage uncomfortable emotions in productive ways,
- identify their natural supports
- solve problems
- handle conflicts peacefully
- and more...

Positive relationships with more than one adult have proven to help children be more resilient and less likely to engage in risky behaviors. At the same time, psychology clinics struggle to maintain the number of staff necessary to address the increasing needs of our children. Passing HB 105 will help close this gap.

If you would like to discuss this in more detail, feel free to call me at (907) 242-3236 or email: jensenangie@hotmail.com.

Thank you for your service and consideration to my request.

Angie Jensen
Retired School Counselor

Anchorage, AK 99515

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 10:27:06 AM

Dear Education Committee --

Thank you for your efforts to move mental health out of the closet and into our living room. The more we talk about mental health, the more we normalize mental health issues, the more we educate youth on this important topic, the more likely youth (and when they become adults) will be more likely to reach out for support when needed.

When I was a principal for a rural remote school I saw the profound impact on the lack of mental health awareness. I was able to cobble together funding for this small school to employ a full-time social worker. Over time, students started telling other students to go and see "Mr. C." (the social worker) because he helped them. With ongoing support, students were able to see that asking for help is a sign of strength vs weakness.

My wondering to you, how might you support these efforts in the area of funding? We can't keep asking school staff to add more to an already full plate.

Kind regards --

Karin Halpin

[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK. 99507
[REDACTED]

Sent from [Outlook](#)

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 9:05:34 AM

This email is in support of HB105 because I believe mental health education will be beneficial to Alaska's youth.

Thanks for considering my views,
Linda O'Bannon

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 8:44:25 AM

Committee members,

I am writing to enter a heartfelt plea to pass HB105 to allow for expansion of youth mental health, including education in schools. It is a tragic statistic that 22% of high school students in our state have seriously considered suicide attempts (Youth Risk Behavior Survey), and our statewide suicide rate is among the highest in the country. Young people today are subjected to influences far beyond those available previously. Social media, including bullying and hazing, is a powerful and potentially toxic influence on young minds and spirits. Teachers should not be placed in the position of providing information and resources, however. There needs to be licensed professional involvement in messaging and delivery. For context, I am a former LCSW and worked in Special Education in the Anchorage School District for five years.

I am also a former Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the Alaska VA Healthcare System, and participated in the Governor's Council on Suicide Prevention as well as the Anchorage Coalition on Suicide Prevention. I know all too well the damage that suicide (and suicide attempts) does to families and communities. If there is action taken when children are young and impressionable, allowing access to age appropriate information and support (for families as well), could be a step toward reducing the devastating harm of suicide.

I urge you to support HB105, for the good of our young people and families.

Respectfully,
Sue Ellen May, MSW
Eagle River

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 7:48:50 AM

Please support HB105. It's really common sense to support this bill since it would be beneficial for Alaska...here are a few reasons why:

- **Comprehensive Health Education:** HB 105 enriches school health education by including mental health alongside essential topics like dental health and cancer prevention. This well-rounded approach destigmatizes talking about mental health and equips children with vital knowledge for healthier choices.
- **Implementation Support:** The bill offers school districts a clear roadmap for adopting mental health education, if they choose, allowing them to maintain local control while providing the necessary age-appropriate resources to address their specific community needs.
- **Addressing Educational Gaps:** Many adults wish they had more information about mental health resources in school. HB 105 aims to fill this gap, empowering students to understand and manage their mental health effectively and fostering lifelong wellness.
- **Early Mental Health Support:** With many mental health challenges surfacing during pre-adolescence, HB 105 promotes early awareness and support, helping students realize they are not alone and encouraging them to seek help, when appropriate. Families are communicated with and given participation choices.

In summary, HB 105 enhances health education in Alaska, providing students with essential mental health knowledge and resources for a healthier future. I would like to thank Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson for her leadership and work on this bill as well.

Thank you for the consideration.

Respectfully,

Lori and Richard Rothstein, Anchorage

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 7:47:14 AM

We all know that suicide rates are the highest in our state. I urge you to pass HB105 so we can equip Alaskans with the mental health knowledge that will benefit each of us and help us support one another in maintaining a higher quality of mental health. What an important safety tool education is in reducing the stigma around these issues and preventing incidents of suicide.

Thank you for considering. Please vote yes on HB105.

Jeanine Griek
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, Ak 99709

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 5:32:41 AM

Please support this bill and send it out of committee.

Having taught at the high school level, I have seen how important awareness of mental health is for pre-adolescents and adolescents, at critical times on their lives

Providing mental health education will better equip youth to live full lives and it will go further to support community wellness.

Under this bill:

Mental health and wellness will be destigmatised. Youth will see that they are not alone, they have choices, and that help is available

Just like finances, proper nutrition, and dental care, youth will be better equipped to take care of themselves, setting a foundation for lifelong health

Curriculum support is provided and can be locally controlled and responsive to parental input

Thanks for your consideration,
Mel Langdon

From: [Sonia \[REDACTED\]](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 2:15:00 AM

My son is 28 and struggles with mental illness. I know now that his issues with mental health started when he was in middle school or early high school. Many times when kids are struggling with mental health issues they start using drugs/alcohol in an effort to feel normal. This only exacerbates the problem and quite often becomes the only thing that the adults in charge see. I could go on for hours on this topic. From my point of view, HB105 is a small but very necessary step in the right direction. Please pass and fund HB105 so steps can be taken to help our young people with mental health issues to be successful, happy contributors to our communities. Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 12:16:04 AM

Hello,
I am writing in support of HB105. Mental Health education is so important for our youth!

Thank you,
Sarah Campen
Gustavus, AK 99826

Sarah Campen

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 11:21:51 AM

This is a request to show support for the HB105 bill. Alaska should not have more of a suicide rate than the rest of the country especially since it is so wonderful to live here.
Thanks Carol Laurion 99507 zip code

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: House bill 105: support
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 9:09:16 AM

I strongly support HB 105 and its intent to enhance the states health education system to include, destigmatize and provide accurate age appropriate mental health information to all ages of students. Informed students can help themselves, and their friends and loved ones, get help before a crisis hits.
Yes to HB 105

Elizabeth Schafer
McCarthy Alaska 99588

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: I support HB 105 - Youth Mental Health
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 10:31:23 AM

I support HB 105, for comprehensive youth and student mental health, education, and resources.

We must give kids the right tools and skills to care for themselves. When I was a teen, if I had greater resources to navigate mental health challenges, it would have made me healthier then, with better tools to navigate my entire life.

I'm a graduate of Juneau Douglas High. I loved my school, town and the people. But there were so many conversations, behaviors and relationships that I did not understand and I struggled with. Simple conversations and tools could have redirected a lot of unnecessary struggle. I was a well-supported student, but for those with less support, it could've made the difference of life or death.

Depression, self-harm, suicide and domestic dysfunction have impacted my friends and family members. They can all be prevented and healed. We must give kids tools to live with.

Sincerely,

Hiram Henry

[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: I support HB105.
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 7:46:33 AM

I support HB105 It is a good start to normalize mental health issues.

Rielle Markey
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK. 99709

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Oppose HB 105
Date: Monday, March 17, 2025 7:29:00 AM

Dear Education Committee Members:

Opposed to HB 105:

I am opposed to the inclusion of mental health education and services within schools. While mental health is undeniably important, I believe that addressing it within the school system is not the best approach for several reasons.

First, schools are primarily academic institutions, and their main focus should be on providing quality education. Teachers are not trained mental health professionals, and expecting them to take on the role of counselors can lead to inadequate support for students who truly need professional help.

Second, mental health is a deeply personal and complex issue that varies greatly from student to student. Addressing it in a school setting may result in a one-size-fits-all approach that overlooks individual needs. Parents and guardians, alongside trained professionals, are better suited to guide children in these matters outside the classroom.

Lastly, incorporating mental health discussions in schools could lead to unintended consequences, such as misdiagnosing students or placing undue stress on educators who are already overburdened with academic responsibilities. Schools should focus on fostering a supportive environment while leaving professional mental health care to qualified experts.

I believe that mental health awareness is important, but it should be addressed in a way that does not compromise the primary mission of our schools: education.

Sincerely,
Patricia Bouton

Soldotna, AK

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Public Testimony HB 105
Date: Monday, March 17, 2025 11:26:27 AM

Public Testimony: Concerns Regarding HB 105 - Mental Health Education Bill

Testimony Submitted to the Alaska State Legislature:

Date: March 17, 2025

To: House Education Committee, Alaska State Legislature

From: Susan Allmeroth, Myself

Subject: Public Testimony on HB 105 - "An Act Relating to Mental Health Education"

Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on House Bill 105, which proposes to establish guidelines for mental health education in Alaska's public schools. While the intention behind this bill is commendable, as it seeks to address an important issue facing our youth, there are several concerns that need to be addressed to ensure the bill is both effective and legally robust.

1. Lack of Definition of "Parental Authority"

A significant concern with HB 105 is the vague language surrounding parental authority. The bill allows parents to withdraw their children from certain activities and programs related to mental health education but does not provide a clear definition of what constitutes "parental authority" in these situations.

This vagueness could lead to:

Inconsistent implementation across school districts, with varying interpretations of parental rights.

Legal challenges due to ambiguity over the scope and limits of a parent's authority.

Potential conflicts between parents and schools, as there may be confusion about the extent of parental rights in withdrawing children from mental health education.

To ensure clarity and consistent enforcement, the bill should include a precise legal definition of "parental authority" or at least clear guidelines for how parental requests should be handled by school districts.

2. Lack of Specific Guidelines for "Developmentally Appropriate" Mental Health Education

HB 105 refers to "developmentally appropriate instruction" in mental health education but does not provide clear criteria for what constitutes appropriate content at different grade levels. Mental health is a sensitive and complex topic, and what may be suitable for one age group may not be appropriate for another.

This lack of specificity may result in:

Inconsistent curriculum across school districts, leading to unequal access to appropriate mental health education.

Confusion about how to tailor lessons to the developmental needs of students.

Potential legal challenges regarding the appropriateness of certain content.

To remedy this, the bill should outline specific age-appropriate mental health education standards or mandate that the State Board of Education work closely with mental health professionals and educators to create detailed guidelines.

3. Absence of Clear Enforcement Mechanisms

While the bill requires the State Board of Education to develop mental health guidelines, there is no explicit enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance by school districts. Without strong penalties for non-compliance, school districts may choose not to follow the guidelines or may delay implementation, undermining the goal of universal access to mental health education.

The lack of enforcement could result in:

Inconsistent application of the bill's intent across different districts.

Delays in program implementation, leaving students without the resources they need in a timely manner.

The bill should include clear accountability measures or penalties for school districts that fail to implement the required guidelines.

4. Potential for Bureaucratic Delays and Inefficiencies

The involvement of multiple state agencies (Department of Health, Department of Family and Community Services, and regional tribal health organizations) in developing mental health education guidelines could create bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies. This complex process may slow down the development and rollout of necessary mental health programs, leaving students without access to critical resources during a time of growing mental health needs.

To mitigate this risk, the bill should outline a clear and efficient timeline for implementation, with provisions for coordination between agencies to ensure timely action.

5. Delays in Implementation

The bill allows for a two-year period to develop mental health education guidelines. While thoughtful consideration is important, this delay could leave students in need of mental health resources without proper support during a crucial time. Given the rising mental health challenges faced by youth in Alaska, a faster timeline would be more appropriate.

Recommendation: Reduce the timeline for developing and implementing the guidelines to ensure more immediate access to mental health education for students.

In conclusion, while HB 105 addresses a critical issue by proposing mental health education in schools, the bill would benefit from further clarification and specificity in key areas. These include providing a clear definition of "parental authority," offering concrete guidelines for developmentally appropriate content, ensuring consistent enforcement of the bill's provisions, and streamlining the process to avoid bureaucratic delays.

I urge the committee to consider these concerns and work toward refining the bill to ensure it achieves its goal of supporting the mental health and well-being of Alaska's students in a clear, effective, and equitable manner.

A definition is all that is needed and clarification between the multiple state departments as well.

Thank you for your time and attention to these important issues.

Susan Allmeroth

Two Rivers

Myself



Subject:
Date:



[House Education](#)

Public Testimony, HB105: Public Schools: Mental Health Education
Friday, February 14, 2025 2:33:34 PM

House Education Committee:

I write to oppose HB105, a bill entitled Public Schools: Mental Health Education.

The state of Alaska and its subdivisions collectively lack the clarity to distinguish between a man and a woman. They do not recognize there are only two genders: male and female. They lack the clarity to recognize that a man cannot become a woman or that a woman cannot become a man. They tolerate concepts of gender fluidity. Our schools promote the use of inaccurate pronouns, which reinforce mental illness among our youth. Public schools have self-designated themselves as the interface between elementary school children and a pathway of life altering treatment resulting in puberty blockers and sex organ mutilation.

As it stands now, I cannot support a bill that empowers the state of Alaska and its subdivisions with an agenda backed by law that delivers sex and mental health education which is unconscionable and horrifying to children.

Misgendering a child in opposition to their gender dysphoria is not violence. Permitting teachers, administrators, and other public officials to use inaccurate pronouns when addressing a child is not compassionate. Use of inaccurate pronouns is reinforcement of a mental illness, which can only be viewed as abuse. Utilizing inaccurate pronouns within sight and earshot of a school full of healthy children is equally disturbing. For as long as the radical gender ideology is allowed to continue within the public school system we are allowing a small minority of disturbed people to cause confusion and mental distress to the overwhelming majority of perfectly healthy public school students.

Please rectify this tragic situation as soon as possible.

Please do not pass HB105.

Sincerely,

Lucas Smith

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Jeanne Reveal [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2025 8:14 AM
To: House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 105 Why I am a No Vote

Dear Ed Committee Members,

After reading the Statement of Support and the Bill, I have concluded that this bill is a shirt-tailed relative to SB41 by Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson. Do we need two proposals for one issue? Mental health education is a wonderful sentiment. However, there is more to it than that. If you want to affect student behavior, change their diets. We have known, as nutritional experts, that the Standard American Diet is to blame for the current affairs of mental health, or the lack thereof. My suggestion is that we fund nutrition studies in classrooms with parental cooperation and support. Let's get real food in the schools.

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has already been conducting such studies of the

mental health of students. SB41 has serious finance issues. How do you fund Mental Health care IN the schools with 216,000? I hope you see that adding another layer of medical care IN the schools is not the answer. Medicaid and IHS already provide the care off site. This is pertinent to the student's image. Parents need to be in charge of their child's care and education. NOT THE GOVERNMENT. The government teaches 3 R's and STEM. Parents teach the rest.

Please don't drown the public with another expensive layer of service already provided for. I urge you to preserve parents' rights by not placing their child's health education on the altar of almighty government.

Regards,

Jeanne Reveal
Concerned Conservative Parent.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Regarding support for HB 105- An Act relating to Mental Health Education
Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 4:59:18 PM
Attachments: [Hb 105- house education committee.pdf](#)

Good afternoon, please accept this letter of support for HB 105 "An Act relating to Mental Health Education" on behalf of the Alaska Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Alliance (APRN).

We stand in support of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch APRN, MPH, MSN, FNP-C
Secretary, Alaska APRN Alliance
Chair, Legislative and Health Policy Committee

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Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch



ALASKA
APRN
ALLIANCE

Alaska APRN Alliance
PO Box 240443
Anchorage, AK 99524

March 18, 2025

House Education Committee: house.education@akleg.gov
120 4th Street
State Capitol Room 502
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Members of the House Education Committee

Thank you for considering House Bill 105 "An Act relating to Mental Health Education".

The Alaska Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Alliance strongly supports the passage of this bill as it would ensure the inclusion of developmentally appropriate mental health education for all students across Alaska in partnership with their parents. Mental health is a critical component to be included in assuring the overall health of students. As reported in the 2021 Surgeon General's Advisory: "Mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing, and is an essential component of overall health. It is the "springboard of thinking and communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience and self-esteem."

The APRN Alliance is comprised of over 2600 Advanced Practice Registered Nurses who practice across Alaska. Of this number a substantial percentage (approximately 2400) are Certified Nurse Practitioners (CNP's) who practice in primary care settings. CNP's are not only working in family practice, pediatrics, and women's health, but a sizable number are board certified in Psychiatric Mental Health and many in this specialize or care for children and teens in their practices. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses received advanced education that includes background on the importance of mental health in overall health. We support expanded education for Alaskan children to learn about how their brain and mind work together in helping them to be healthy. Having a well-grounded and vetted curriculum that respects culture, and community is one of the ways to support our children's overall well-being.

We thank you for introducing this legislation and for the work you do on behalf of Alaska's children.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Johnstone-Petty, DNP, FNP-C, APRN, ACHPN
President
Alaska APRN Alliance

Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch MSN, MPH, FNP-C, APRN
Chair, Legislative and Health Care Policy Committee
Secretary, Board of Directors, Alaska APRN Alliance

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Strongly IN FAVOR of HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 7:07:18 AM

Greetings,

I am writing in favor of passing HB 105 supporting mental health education in our school system.

When we are able to get information about something that affects us, or others for that matter, that we don't understand, it provides a way to help us deal with it rather than ignore it. It lessons stigmatization, judgment and guilt.

Because Alaskan youth suffer high numbers of substance use disorders, mental health issues and rates of suicide, it seems smartly proactive to provide support and education around the topic of mental health to lessen the burden of students, family, teachers and the community at large. It would also decrease the economic impact to the state.

Please vote to approve HB 105. Thank you.

Respectfully,
Constance Markis
Anchorage, Alaska

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Rep. Alyse Galvin](#)
Subject: Support for HB 105, Mental Health in Education
Date: Monday, March 24, 2025 7:49:25 PM

Dear Members of the House,

I'm writing in support of HB 105, Mental Health in Education. I have read the bill and think it's evenhanded, clear, appropriate and--most importantly--needed.

Our society has come a long way in understanding that mental health cannot be separated from other forms of health: we support education about dental health, hygiene, substance abuse, personal safety, good nutrition and more. It's important that mental health instruction be supported in the same way. This not only gives children the tools needed to understand and care for their mental health and that of others, but also positions mental health with other "normalized" conditions they experience. Stigma surrounding mental health is dated and dangerous.

I volunteered in my two children's classrooms from preschool through middle school. As well, I have volunteered in my daughter-in-law's K/1 classroom. When presenting sensitive subjects, I never saw a teacher go out-of-bounds on a topic nor be dismissive of children's reactions to the topic. I have every belief that teachers will present mental health topics in an age-appropriate way.

Please approve HB 105.

Thank you,
Constance Quinley

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Rep. Sara Hannan](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Alyse Galvin](#)
Subject: Support HB 105
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 8:39:40 AM

Dear Members of the Alaska House Education Committee,

I'm a retired Alaskan teacher, writing to urge you to support the passage of HB 105 from the House Education Committee. The bill provides a roadmap for districts wishing to adopt locally-controlled mental health education while providing age-appropriate resources to address their specific community needs. The bill will enrich school health education, equipping children with vital knowledge for healthier choices. The information that will be available through the passage of this bill will promote student awareness and support, encouraging them to seek help when they need it. Please pass this bill out of the Education Committee and support its passage into law.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Luann McVey

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Rep. Alyse Galvin](#)
Subject: Support Letter for HB105 via House Education
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 9:16:14 AM

March, 2025

To: Alaska House Education Committee

From: Michael P. Carson, V.P. & Recovery Specialist w/ MYHOUSE of Mat-Su and Chair of the Mat-Su Opioid & Youth Task Force

Re. Support Letter for HB105- Public Schools: Mental Health Education

Alaska is experiencing a youth mental health crisis with our youth suicide rate being 3.2 times higher than the average U.S. rate during 2016-2018.

Then, unfortunately, Alaska had an increase with suicides in 2019 due to adolescent life stressors, mental pain including guilt, hopelessness, angst, fear and rage.

Substance misuse is one of the most common risk factors of suicide. While life stressors play a role in these mental health (or lack thereof) issues, there is a significant risk increase after intoxication and/or being under the influence.

In addition, co-occurring conditions and challenges may exacerbate existing levels of stress like bullying, poverty, and especially traumatic events.

Mental health education can provide a range of helpful strategies to promote overall health, learning positive coping skills and most importantly, reinforcing building positive relationships with trusted adults and like-minded peers.

Again, our youth are in a mental health crisis. This is very alarming with a 43% rate of Alaskan youth having persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness for 2 weeks straight and stopping usual activities, this past year.

In addition, a 22% rate of Alaskan youth seriously considered attempting suicide this past year.

And, a 19% rate of Alaskan youth attempted suicide one or more times during the past year.

It is imperative to provide our youth with mental health education to keep them safe, healthy and thriving!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Sources: State of Alaska Epidemiology, **Bulletin, no.5** & 2023 AK Youth Risk Behavior Survey

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Supporting HB 105 - Mental Health Education in Schools
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 11:13:26 AM

Dear House Education Committee Members -

I am writing to SUPPORT HB 105 - short title: Public Schools: Mental Health Education.

This proposal will enrich school health education by including mental health alongside essential topics like dental health and cancer prevention. This well-rounded approach REMOVES negative associations with talking about mental health and equips children with vital knowledge for healthier choices. It offers school districts a clear roadmap for adopting mental health education if they choose AND allows them to maintain local control while providing the necessary age-appropriate resources to address their specific community needs.

We understand - many adults would like to have more information about mental health resources in schools and this legislation fulfills that need. It EMPOWERS students to understand and manage their mental health while fostering lifelong wellness.

So many mental health challenges surface during pre-adolescence. HB 105 will promote early awareness and support - helping students realize they are not alone - AND - encouraging them to seek help when appropriate. Families are communicated with and given participation choices.

Yes, I have utilized talking points suggested by Representative Alyse Galvin - but this is SO IMPORTANT. It is a fact that young Alaskan's between the age of 15 and 24 are experiencing more than TWICE the national average number of incidents of self-harm and/or DEATH by suicide. This legislation - HOUSE BILL 105 - is a good first step to address the mental health challenges with age-appropriate programs - PLUS - family engagement and consent.

I know the House Education Committee realizes the value of this proposed legislation, but beyond passage through committee, I urge members to lobby their colleagues who may not be so inclined. Mental health issues cross over every boundary - from childhood, to adults to the community to our entire "Alaska"...Help us begin a healthier future!

Respectfully,
Martha A. Reinbold
[REDACTED]
Eagle River, AK 99577

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Support for HB105: Public Schools Mental Health Education
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 9:53:35 AM

Hello House Education Committee Members,

I am a constituent from Anchorage writing in support of House Bill 105, Public Schools Mental Health Education. This bill would help open up important conversations about mental health in age-appropriate ways with family involvement and consent.

Our youth are struggling; surveys show that one in five Alaskan high schoolers has attempted suicide in the last year, and half say they have easy access to a loaded gun (2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey). My husband is a pediatrician in Anchorage who frequently counsels suicidal teens, and our family has been impacted by firearm suicide, which has affected our close relatives for decades.

More can be done in public schools to address mental health and suicide and to engage families in these important discussions. I hope state leaders will make mental health education a priority by advancing this bill.

Thank you,
Rochelle Parker
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99502

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Support HB 105 - kids mental health support
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 10:58:06 AM

Please support this bill supporting youth mental health in Alaska.

Our teen daughter struggled with mental health challenges - severe depression. We struggled to find her care and support in state when she was a minor. The providers were limited, there were long wait times to get into providers, and once she was hospitalized with her severe depression for her own safety, there was nowhere in the state to help her. We had to pay out of our pocket many many thousands of dollars to get her good care out of state. We would have loved to have more education and support early on in the schools, so we support HB 105 to make it easier for families and youth in the future.

Even though we are middle class, educated small business owners we struggled mightily to navigate the incomplete, broken, expensive and overtaxed youth mental health system in Alaska. Even though we had insurance, it covered very little and we were confused and frustrated that we had so little support finding quality care for our daughter. Thankfully we had wonderful school nurses (but they were limited and overtaxed) & found wonderful therapists and doctors, but it has been a long hard road that must be made easier for other families. Better education and resources in the school would be helpful and preventative.

I hope the system can be improved, and that other kids get preventative education & better local care and support in the schools and the community. We can and must do better for mental health for our kids in Alaska. Please support HB 105.

Shannon McBride-Morin

[REDACTED]
Homer, AK 99603
[REDACTED]

Shannon McBride-Morin
Co-Owner & Operator

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Claire Fordyce

From: Sara Sturgeon [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 1:17 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Support for HB 105

Good afternoon,

I am writing in support of House Bill 105, Mental Health Education in schools. Alaskan Children experience twice the national average for self-harm and death by suicide - that is a staggering statistic. My daughter lost a friend and classmate in high school to suicide. The ripple effect of that experience was so damaging and heartbreaking for all of her friends. And as a parent, walking alongside her parents whose child had just died, it was truly devastating. So much loss, felt so deeply in our school, on her sports teams and throughout the community. And again, just a couple of weeks ago, my youngest son lost a college age friend by suicide from Anchorage. That young man had been suffering since childhood with his mental health. We are heartbroken for their family. I see the real need for early learning and education that normalizes the discussions around mental health for our youth.

I believe that it is imperative that if we de-stigmatize mental health issues and make it as common place as any other health topic, it will support children who are struggling and empower them to understand + better manage their wellness. I also believe in right sizing the education for age-related topics and this bill will provide resources for that.

I stand firmly that so many community safety issues, and homelessness are also stemming from mental health issues in our state. It is so important to make this a priority. Please help pass HB105 for our Alaskan children.

Thank you,

Sara Sturgeon
[REDACTED]

Claire Fordyce

From: nancy little [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 12:35 PM
To: House Education
Subject: HB105

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I urge each of you to support HB 105, promoting health and mental health education. Of all the things students learn that would make a difference in their lives, these are the most important. I've been caring for children for almost 50 years, and involved with multiple schools, as well as having a 50 year career as a family nurse practitioner.
Nancy Schupp, retired ARNP
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Ester, AK, 99725

Love From, Nancy



CITIZENS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

March 17, 2025

House Education Committee

HB 105 PUBLIC SCHOOLS: MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Dear Committee Members:

HB 105 starts with a generic outcome – mental health education.

Section 4 language identifying the group to create the guidelines by comparison is a narrowly focused group that lacks diversity of thought. Based on supporters submitted material this view is the behavior as disease or biological mental health model.

There is a notable lack of inclusion of views from other healthcare providers, naturopaths, alternative providers, community and spiritual support that would need to be included if a meaningful informed consent for a course of action were to be achieved.

What is stigmatizing about mental health are the labels of psychiatry and the debilitating brain altering treatments and their chemical effects on the person all while no medical test shows anything to be wrong with their brains.

"There are no objective tests in psychiatry-no X-ray, laboratory, or exam finding that says definitively that someone does or does not have a mental disorder."— Allen Frances, Psychiatrist and former DSM-IV Task Force Chairman

Telling a person, especially a young person they are mentally ill can be debilitating.

"Labelling individuals with mental disorders can be harmful, ... This can include stereotypes and stigmatizing terms, which can lead to biased psychological labelling. **Negative or limiting language perpetuates stereotypes and creates harmful labels that influence how individuals are perceived and treated by others.** Labelling theory ... suggests that individuals may internalize and conform to the labels assigned to them, potentially reinforcing certain traits due to performative aspects of communication.

"Labelling can overshadow understanding and lead individuals to adopt the identity of a mentally ill patient, even when their experiences are entirely normal given their life situations. When clinicians follow these rigid performative linguistic categories about mental health, it can create traps, and people may start behaving according to the labels given to them. This can lead to a cycle where the labels become true because of how people treat them, generating a self-fulfilling prophecy. –Rethinking Mental Health: Challenging the Dangers of Labels - *The Impact of Labelling – Psychology Today 7/27/23*

The argument for this bill comes across as a completely new attempt to reach these youth with mental health treatment and this is simply not reality. Society has been inundated with psychiatric marketing to the point where parents now think in terms of therapeutic language for helping their youth along with providers and now schools using diagnosable and treatable and early intervention language for decades now. It must be noted that has not made any of the problems lessen over the last 50 years!!

"Whatever we've been doing for five decades, it ain't working. And when I look at the numbers—the number of suicides, number of disabilities, mortality data—it's abysmal, and it's not getting any better." - *Thomas Insel*, former Director of National Institute of Mental Health

Summary


The bill should clearly state the goal of a broad based holistic educational approach to help our youth be understanding of environmental, familial and societal factors they have available and can use to help them navigate adolescence and schooling into adulthood. Mental health education should not be a basics course in psychiatric terminology of disorders turning schools into psychiatric profit centers and creating treatment amenable citizens without objective diagnosis.(See attachments 1, 2 & 3 for more information)

"Whatever we've been doing for five decades, it ain't working. And when I look at the numbers—the number of suicides, number of disabilities, mortality data—it's abysmal, and it's not getting any better." - *Thomas Insel*, former Director of National Institute of Mental Health

"... these two trends—deteriorating mental health in an era of vastly expanded awareness, detection, diagnosis, and treatment of psychological disorders—may be just that: coincidence. It does not unveil a causal arrow. But it is peculiar. At the very least, it may provide a clue that many of the treatments and many of the helpers aren't actually helping. - *Abigail Shrier* - Bad Therapy - WHY THE KIDS ARENT GROWING UP

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss needed language and to provide more material on these points.

Sincerely,



Steven Pearce
Director

Attachments:

SERVING ALASKA / MONTANA / WASHINGTON

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ND SYSTEMS

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March 17, 2025

Members of the House Education Committee

RE: Support of House Bill 105: *"An Act relating to mental health education."*

As an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) specializing as a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) with a specific focus of care for children and young people, I am in support of SB 41 and HB 105.

I offer care through ND Systems Inc., a private outpatient mental health practice in three Alaskan communities, Anchorage, Fairbanks and Kenai. Our team of PMHNP's, Masters in Social Work and Master's in Education with a focus in counseling, serve these communities. ND Systems revenues are 57% generated from Medicaid and Medicare. We work closely with our communities Office of Children Services and Guardian ad Litem. We are in a unique position to see how an expanded education that brings a common language and understanding to how the brain and mind works through a well-developed and well-grounded mental health education would be helpful to our communities.

Many of the children and young people that we serve do not have a good understanding of the language or definition of mental health as a subject and neither do their family members. What is universally clear, is that families are keen to help improve the wellbeing of their children. Having a well grounded and vetted curriculum that respects culture, community and family ways of knowing, will serve our children well and perhaps improve communication within our communities.

Again thank you for consideration of this legislation and your commitment and courage serving our communities and children.

Respectfully,

Teresa Lyons, APRN, PMHNP
CEO ND Systems, Inc.
(907) 460-1868 (personal cellphone number)

Fairbanks

Kenai
Telehealth Available

Anchorage

