

Submitter: Claire goff  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2729

Dear Oregon legislators, my name is Claire Goff and I am a student at Benson Polytechnic High school.

To put it plainly, the mental health of Oregon students is suffering. Almost daily do I hear about countless students suffering with depression and anxiety due to a multitude of issues and having to take mental health days to recuperate. And not as often but certainly with some degree of frequency do I hear of students missing school because they were hospitalized after making attempts on their lives. Along with the skyrocketing rates of chronic absenteeism among students reaching as high as 40% in some districts, nearly double that of pre-covid levels that administrators have struggled to remedy, it is obvious that the declining mental health of students is having a detrimental affect on their education.

While most students have access to counselors who can help them with their mental health, there is little they can do other than refer students to outside resources that many don't have the time or means to access. School based health centers are able to effectively remedy the student mental health crisis by providing convenient and confidential care at schools. Not only have they helped with the student mental health crisis but they have become an integral part of the school communities where they are present by helping educate students on health and providing care ranging from vaccines, to routine check-ups, to sports physicals. Another key role they play, is streamlining responses to in-school medical emergencies. In fact just last week I passed out during school after getting a blood test earlier that day. Shortly after, the nurse and assistant on staff were able to take my my blood pressure, heart rate and blood oxygen levels to make sure I was safe. When EMTs eventually arrived, other than repeating those same tests, the only other thing they checked was my blood sugar which I had already remedied with some cookies. The approval of HB 2729 would mean school based health centers like the one at my school would be able to continue to fill the critical role they play in our communities and continue to combat the student mental health crisis. It is for these reasons that I urge you to vote yes on this bill to continue to support our students and the staff that serve them.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Claire Goff