

March 24, 2020

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Honorable Jim Wood  
Chair, Assembly Health  
Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6005  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Patrick O'Donnell  
Chair, Assembly Education Committee  
1029 N Street, Room 159  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2668 (Quirk-Silva and Weber) Integrated School-Based Behavioral Health Partnership Program – SUPPORT**

Dear Chair O'Donnell and Chair Wood,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness – California (NAMI-CA) is in strong support of AB 2668 which will encourage local educational agencies (LEAs) and county behavioral health agencies to collaborate on providing care on campus for students in need of mental health or substance use disorder services.

NAMI-CA is the statewide affiliate of the country's largest mental health advocacy organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Our over 110,000 active advocates and 62 affiliates include many people living with serious mental illnesses, their families, and supporters. NAMI-CA advocates on their behalf, providing education and support to its members and the broader community.

When schools reopen, the Partnership Programs established under this bill will ensure children and adolescents access the behavioral health services they need in a safe setting. The Partnership Program will ensure any child in need will have timely access to a behavioral health provider.

Studies show that early intervention and prevention mental health services are crucial. However, research shows that over 300,000 children in California between the ages of 4 and 11 have mental health needs, but the majority of them do not receive treatment. Further research shows 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75% by age 24. The number of children who never receive treatment is even higher for children in poverty or with non-English speaking parents.

NAMI-CA believes that both public and private elementary, middle, and high schools should provide and/or facilitate and sustain provision of appropriate mental health services, supports, and appropriate accommodations. For these reasons, we proudly support AB 2668.

Sincerely,



Jessica Cruz, MPA/HS  
Chief Executive Officer