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April 16, 2021

The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva  
California State Assembly Member  
California State Capitol, Room 6012  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 552 (Quirk-Silva) Integrated School-Based Behavioral Health Partnership Program – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Quirk-Silva:

On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness - California (NAMI-CA), I am writing to express support of your AB 552, which establishes an Integrated School-Based Behavioral Health Partnership Program.

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.

The collaborative program established by AB 552 would maximize the expertise among both schools and county behavioral health systems in meeting the mental health and educational needs of our children and youth. While many counties and schools do currently collaborate in the care and treatment needs of students, AB 552 creates a structured model to follow and includes mechanisms for the state and stakeholders to remain apprised of the outcomes of the programs. Additionally, the bill recognizes the critical importance of working with commercial health plans to ensure their obligations to meet the health and behavioral health care needs of young enrollees.

Children and youth are experiencing escalating mental health needs and face numerous barriers to accessing care and support. Early data indicate that the COVID-19 public health emergency is further exacerbating children's mental health needs. Now more than ever, counties, schools, and health plans must rise to the challenge of reaching the many young Californians returning to school in need of support and treatment services.

For these reasons, NAMI-CA is pleased to support AB 552. I may be reached at [jessica@namica.org](mailto:jessica@namica.org) or (916) 567-0163 with any questions you may have. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jessica Cruz, MPA/HS  
Chief Executive Officer