August 6, 2019

The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chair
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow,

Thank you for your bipartisan work toward developing a pathway for Child Nutrition Reauthorization this Congress as child nutrition programs play critical roles in the development of our nation’s children and adolescents. On behalf of the below national, state, and local organizations, we encourage the Committee to consider including eating disorders prevention within the Local School Wellness Policies as found in Section 4 of the bipartisan Long-term InVestments in Education for Wellness (LIVE Well) Act (H.R. 2625), as another vital component toward fostering the mental and physical well-being of children within schools.

Since the creation of Local School Wellness Policies within the WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Sec. 204 of P.L. 108-265), many schools have focused on obesity prevention programming without considering any adverse effects on children at-risk of or who experience eating disorders. Studies show high rates of students meeting the criteria for eating disorder risk or warranting clinical referral (58% of reported overweight/obese students, 34% of reported normal weight students, and 25% of reported underweight students). Further, research demonstrates that a focus on appearance and weight can promote disordered eating behaviors, contribute to body dissatisfaction, dieting, low self-esteem, and reliably predict greater weight gain over time.

Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses affecting 30 million Americans during their lifetime. The eating disorders are complex, biologically based illnesses and have a high mortality rate amongst psychiatric illnesses, only second to opioids. While eating disorders can be successfully treated, 75 percent of adolescents with anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa and 90 percent of those with binge eating disorder never receive treatment. Compounding the severity of eating disorders, individuals typically have co-occurring mental health diagnoses including, depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Left undiagnosed and untreated, eating disorders can lead and amplify to co-occurring mental and physical conditions such as Type II diabetes, cardiac disability, hepatitis, cognitive dysfunction, kidney failure, osteoporosis, fractures, infertility, gall bladder disease, esophageal cancer, decalcification of teeth, high/low blood pressure, and inflammation of the esophagus. Further, the suicide rate for individuals with eating disorder is 23 percent higher than the rate for the general population.

---

To protect youth at-risk for or who experience an eating disorder, schools should balance their approach to student wellness and include eating disorders prevention within their existing Local School Wellness Policies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness
American Academy of Pediatrics, Florida Chapter
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Art Therapy Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Balance Nutrition Counseling, PLLC  Nashville, Tennessee
B. Wheeler Nutrition, LLC  Sandy Springs, Georgia
Carolyn Felton Nutrition Therapy  Raleigh, North Carolina
Clinical Social Work Association
Confederation of Independent Psychoanalytic Societies (CIPS)
Doorways, LLC  Phoenix, Arizona
International Federation of Eating Disorders Dietitians
Mental Health America  Washington, DC
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action
E.L.M. Wellness  Raleigh, North Carolina
Elyse Resch, MS, RDN, CEDRD, FAND  Beverly Hills, California
Embody Therapy  Oak Park, Illinois
Fearless With Food, LLC  Portland, Oregon
Mental Health Council of Arkansas
Michigan Eating Disorders Alliance
Minnesota Women’s Consortium  St. Paul, Minnesota
National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Eating Disorders Association
National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health
National PTA  Houston, Texas
Nourish, LLC  Towson, Maryland
Nutrition Counseling For Intuitive Eating
Ruby Health and Wellness  Bend, Oregon
S-Ganginis, LLC  Ellicott City, Maryland
Sandy Hook Promise
School-Based Health Alliance
School Social Work Association of America
Spectrum Psychology and Wellness, LLC  Gilbert, Arizona
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suicide Awareness Voices of Education</td>
<td>Bloomington, Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Arkansas Regional Health Center</td>
<td>El Dorado, Arkansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Global Alliance for Behavioral Science and Social Justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kennedy Forum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Eating Disorders Program</td>
<td>Iowa City, Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Milk and Honey, LLC</td>
<td>Oxford, Mississippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Healing Center</td>
<td>Ellicott City, Maryland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>