



EDC Announces Collaboration on Eating Disorders Prevention in Schools

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 30, 2021) — The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is pleased to announce that the organization has joined [The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness](#) and [Be Real USA](#) to advance the Eating Disorders Prevention in Schools Act (EDPSA) in the 117th Congress. This bill would require the inclusion of eating disorders prevention within Local School Wellness Policies (LSWPs), and encourage screening for eating disorders in our nation’s public schools.

This collaboration would not have been possible without the groundwork laid by the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) during the 116th Congress to advance federal eating disorders prevention policy. The EDC, The Alliance, and Be Real USA look forward to building upon their work to ensure this bill is signed into law.

Led by Representatives Alma Adams, (D-NC), Vicky Hartzler (R-MO), and Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) in the 116th Congress, the Eating Disorders Prevention in Schools Act of 2020 ([H.R. 6703](#)) seeks to reduce disordered eating and eating disorders among children and adolescents through preventive efforts within existing LSWP programming. A LSWP is a written document that guides a local education agency (LEA) or school district’s effort to create supportive nutrition and physical activity environments. Any LEA or school district with a free or reduced breakfast or lunch program must have a LSWP in place; however, only a handful of LSWPs incorporate eating disorders prevention. In fact, many LSWPs focus solely on obesity prevention, which can promote disordered eating and unhealthy weight control behaviors. This is particularly relevant for students in higher weight bodies who are often the target of this programming, with research showing two-thirds of youth in higher weight bodies are at risk for developing an eating disorder.

The Eating Disorders Prevention in Schools Act is particularly timely given current trends related to eating disorders among young people in the U.S. An estimated 1 million adolescents every month engage in weight control behaviors, and approximately 1.9 million children and adolescents alive today will be diagnosed with an eating disorder before they turn 20 years old.

“The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness is thrilled to partner with our friends at the EDC and Be Real USA on this very impactful piece of legislation. Prevention and early intervention are a significant part of ensuring that not one more child and adolescent has to experience the effects and ramifications of this highly lethal and serious mental illness,” said **Alliance CEO Johanna Kandel**.

“Be Real is thrilled to be a partner in advancing EDPSA,” said **Be Real USA Founder & Executive Director Denise Hamburger**. “Be Real’s mission is to provide body image resources to schools across the country. This legislation makes schools aware of ways schools can create a body confident environment for their students.”

The 117th Congress represents a unique opportunity for the passage of EDPSA, as the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry held its first committee hearing on Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) last week. CNR, which allows the federal government to reform child nutrition programs including LSWPs, can only be reauthorized every five years, and it has been over ten years since CNR legislation last passed.

One of the witnesses at the hearing was Dr. Lee Savio Beers, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics. In her written [testimony](#), Dr. Beers addresses the rise and severity in eating disorders, especially among younger age groups during the pandemic.

“The EDC is excited to work with The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness and Be Real USA to advance the Eating Disorders Prevention in Schools Act,” said **EDC Board President Chase Bannister, MDIV, MSW, LCSW, CEDS**. “EDPSA will help combat programming in schools focused exclusively on obesity prevention by requiring the inclusion of eating disorders prevention programming in Local School Wellness Policies, which is especially needed in a time when the mental and physical health of young people is under such threat.”

The EDC, The Alliance, and Be Real USA look forward to continuing to advance this legislation and keeping our communities apprised as the process unfolds.

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, DC-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can also be found at eatingdisorderscoalition.org.

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