Improving Mental Health and Wellness in Schools Act
Led by Reps. Kathy Manning (D-NC-06) & Vicky Hartzler (R-MO-04)

Youth Mental Health Needs

1 in 6 youth experience a mental health disorder each year.

2.3 Million
The number of youth coping with severe major depression.

50%
The percentage of students who receive some type of mental health care at school.

The Issue:

Local School Wellness Policies focus only on educating and promoting physical health and nutrition education, missing the mental health component.

Consequences of Physical Health Promotion Without Mental Health

Research demonstrates that a focus on appearance and weight can promote disordered eating behaviors and can lead to body dissatisfaction.

Body dissatisfaction contributes to:
- Risk factor for almost all eating disorders
- Direct cause of low self-esteem
- Anxiety, depression, isolation, and suicidal thoughts
- Substance use and abuse

Solution:

- Add mental health promotion and education requirements to existing guidelines for Local School Wellness Policies.
  - Studies have shown comprehensive school mental health programs help students academic achievement and build upon core social skills, leadership, self-awareness, and caring connections to adults in their school and communities.

- Include SAMHSA to consult with the CDC in providing technical assistance for states and schools, including encouraging mental health promotion.

- Requires the Secretary to provide a study to Congress on the findings of the updated LSWPs.

- Provides $5 million to assist schools to integrate mental health promotion into their policies.

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