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The Mental Health Career Promotion Act

Poor mental health impacts millions of students, with two in five reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the last 30 days, and one in five reporting that they have seriously considered attempting suicide in 2023. Despite the severity of these challenges, many students go untreated because they do not know where to seek help and there are not enough trained mental health professionals available to meet the growing demand.

One of the most effective steps that Congress can take to address this shortage is to expand opportunities for students to learn about and pursue careers in mental health. As the nation continues to confront a worsening mental health crisis, this legislation supports strengthening the next generation of mental health professionals.

The Mental Health Career Promotion Act would bolster the behavioral and mental health workforce pipeline by providing students with educational opportunities in the mental health field. This bill would create the *Behavioral and Mental Health Career Promotion Grant Program*, administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which would provide funding to schools to establish a mental health career promotion program for high-school and community college students.

Behavioral and Mental Health Career Promotion Grant Program – The program's funding would create partnerships between high schools and community colleges with a community-based mental or behavioral health authority to educate and promote careers in mental health. Specifically, this grant program would:

- Provide educational presentations to students that increase exposure to and knowledge of the mental health field
- Coordinate internship and externship opportunities for students who are interested in mental health
- Arrange opportunities for students to interact with and shadow mental health care professionals
- Establish student mentorship opportunities in mental health

Endorsing Organizations: American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, National Council for Mental Wellbeing, Jed Foundation, National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI), American Foundation for Suicide Prevention