
The Today's Students Coalition Statement on Mental Health Awareness Month

WASHINGTON (May 17, 2023) – The Today's Students Coalition (TSC) is encouraged by the bipartisan and bicameral interest from Congress to address the significant mental health needs of Americans. Yet the growing mental health crisis on college campuses lacks attention from lawmakers and raises concern for today's students.

At the start of Mental Health Awareness Month, we strongly urge Congress to support and prioritize the mental health needs of the roughly 20 million students in higher education. Without affordable and equitable access to mental health resources, students are far more likely to consider suicide, experience substance abuse, or drop out/stop out of college. Mental health is fundamental for students to complete school and contribute civically and economically to the future of our nation.

Despite the surging demand for mental health services for college students, the availability of federal support to address these needs is exceedingly low. To meet the moment, Congress should invest in existing programs and reexamine how key legislation can support the mental health needs of America's college students. The TSC – a collective of 39 higher education policy, advocacy, and membership organizations – supports:

- Expanding the authorization level of the Garrett Lee Smith Campus (GLS) Suicide Prevention Grant - the only federal program currently available to directly support mental and behavioral health services for college students - to \$20 million to help institutions of higher education counteract the mental health epidemic;
- Prioritizing support for under-resourced institutions and those serving historically underrepresented students, such as community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges & Universities (TCUs), other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs); and
- Ensuring mental health investments reach students with intersecting mental health needs and barriers to treatment, including LGBTQ+ students, BIPOC students, parenting students, military-connected, first-generation, low-income students, and adult learners.

With additional financial resources, schools will be able to provide the care necessary to support students struggling with mental health and help navigate challenges to their academic success. The TSC will continue to seek sustainable solutions to promote the health and success of today's students.

Today's Students Coalition