

# **SUMMARY: “Mental Health in Schools Act of 2007”**

## **Purpose:**

- The House Mental Health in Schools Act builds on the foundation of S.1332, introduced by Senators Kennedy, Enzi, Domenici, and Dodd, and includes new input from educators, school psychologists, school administrators and mental health advocates.
- Both the House and Senate bills authorize competitive grants to local education agencies in order to assist them in providing comprehensive school-based mental health programs for students (K-12) in communities across America. The bill increases opportunities for our nation’s 95,000 public schools grades K-12 and provides better access to mental health services for the approximately 53 million school children in our country.

## **How are we going to do this?:**

- By broadening the scope of the Safe Schools-Healthy Students program, which currently focuses on helping children deal with violence to include services and supports for (1) students in need of immediate mental health supports, (2) students at-risk of behavioral mental health disorders, and (3) all students to promote positive mental health..

## **What this legislation will do?:**

- Provide schools with the flexible use of funds to expand their current mental health programs.
- Increase collaboration between schools, families, media entities, and their communities’ resources through partnerships to provide and sustain more comprehensive mental health programs in schools.
- Require schools to apply a public health approach that incorporates positive behavioral interventions and supports to mental health programs in schools, which emphasizes promotion and prevention in addition to treatment.
- Require schools to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate comprehensive staff development to all school personnel (including ancillary staff and volunteers) in the techniques and supports in:
  1. Early identification of children with, or at risk of, mental illness,
  2. The use of effective referral mechanisms to ensure treatment intervention services for such children, and
  3. Strategies that promote a school-wide positive environment.
  4. School system organization and operation
  5. Models for school collaboration, coordination, and consulting
- Provide support and training for parents, other family members of students, concerned members of community, and children with mental health disorders
- Provide a broad needs assessment of youth who drop out of school
- Require schools to thoroughly document measures of outcome and demonstrate the actions they are taking to sustain the program independently of grant funds.

## **How much will this legislation cost?:**

- \$200,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012 to support 200 grants to local educational agencies nationwide.