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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Mental Health Bills Signed Into Law

## *Press release*

**Sacramento, California, October 10, 2021** — This week, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law three important bills focused on improving support for student mental health: Senate Bill (SB) 14, which better connects school districts to mental health services and enables students to take mental health days of absence; Senate Bill 224, which mandates instruction about mental health, and Assembly Bill (AB) 309, which would direct the creation of protocols to address student mental health issues. As a proud co-sponsor of these bills, GENup celebrates the governor's actions on these bills, which will ensure that schools are better equipped to address the growing mental health needs of California's diverse student population.

The move to integrate mental health curriculum and support into the state's primary and secondary educational institutions comes amidst heightened concerns for the state of young people's mental health. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reported that beginning in April 2020, the proportion of mental-health related emergency department visits among all pediatric emergency department visits increased by 24% for children ages 5-11 and by 31% for children ages 12-17, a clear sign of the emotional toll the pandemic has wrought on the country. By allowing students and school staff alike to become more familiar with the problems associated with mental health and how to directly address them, SB 14 and 224 as well as AB 309 will significantly advance the effort against depression, anxiety, and myriad other mental health concerns plaguing our youth.

GENup congratulates the Governor on his decision to advance student interests by passing measures to protect young people fighting mental health issues. We appreciate the work of our internal mental health committee in co-sponsoring this legislation and assisting in its passage. The governor's actions on this legislation will undoubtedly catalyze further efforts to create top-down change in how the public sector addresses mental health issues, thereby aiding local efforts to reverse the worsening trends of student mental health on a statewide level.

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