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**Coalition Applauds Assembly Education Committee for Passing SB 428**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – Today, the California Assembly Education Committee passed SB 428 by a bipartisan vote (5-0). It now moves ahead to the Assembly Health Committee for approval. The bill would require a percentage of staff and teachers in each school be trained in a program like Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA). YMHFA is a comprehensive training specifically designed to equip educators, family members, and caregivers with the skills and knowledge to identify, understand, and respond to the signs or risk factors of mental illness and substance use disorders in youth. The purpose of the bill is to increase school and community-level capacity to tackle California’s growing youth mental health crisis.

SB 428 is supported by a broad coalition led by Born This Way Foundation, California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA), County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), and Children Now. Following the assembly’s action today, Le Ondra Clark Harvey, a spokesperson for the coalition and Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for CBHA said:

“Our coalition came together in support of this bill because the mental wellbeing of students is critical to their ability to lead healthy lives. As representatives of service providers and experts in the field, we believe there are actionable solutions to California’s growing youth mental health crisis. This coalition strongly supports SB 428, which seeks to better equip teachers and school staff on the frontlines of this crisis, and to increase access to mental health trainings in schools. We thank Senators Pan and Portantino for introducing this important piece of legislation, and we thank the Assembly Education Committee for their support with passing the bill out of committee.”

Rimmi Hundal, Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services at the Tri-City Mental Health Services, and Andrea Zimmerman, a retired teacher and school administrator and current YMHFA trainer with Wellness Together provided testimony alongside Senator Pan at today’s hearing.

“I think about all the missteps I could have avoided as a teacher and an administrator if I had Mental Health First Aid training at the beginning of my career, and the impact that would have multiplied across all teachers and schools. Our youth deserve learning environments



where they're surrounded by adults who are trained to respond to their mental health needs," said Andrea Zimmerman.

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[California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies](#) (CBHA) is a statewide association of county funded non-profit community agencies dedicated to the proposition that the people of California deserve a rational, comprehensive, community-based behavioral health system that is adequately funded to serve all those in need of services. We are their voice at the Capitol and with state agencies, and work to ensure that state and county programs support integrated services for children, youth, adults and the elderly which includes physical health, behavioral health, housing, social services, education, substance abuse services and vocational rehabilitation.

The [County Behavioral Health Directors Association](#) is a statewide non-profit association that represents all 58 county behavioral health directors and 2 city mental health programs (Berkeley and Tri-City) which is dedicated to advocating for public policy and services on behalf of people who are living with substance use disorders and mental illness.

Led by Lady Gaga and her mother Cynthia Germanotta, [Born This Way Foundation](#) was founded in 2012 to support the wellness of young people and empower them to create a kinder and braver world. To achieve these goals, the Foundation leverages evidence-based programming and authentic partnerships in order to provide young people with improved mental health resources and kinder communities - online and offline.

[Children Now](#) is a non-partisan, whole-child research, policy development and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting children's health and education in California. The organization also leads [The Children's Movement of California](#), a network of more than 3,000 direct service, parent, civil rights, faith-based and community groups dedicated to improving children's well-being.