

Summary

The American College Health Association (ACHA) is the principal leadership organization for advancing the health and well-being of college students and campus communities through advocacy, education, and research.

As guiding principles, **ACHA** supports policies and government actions that:

1. Strengthen college health systems;
2. Advance the health and well-being of college students and communities; and
3. Help ensure accessible and quality college education.

This agenda outlines ACHA's major federal policy priorities for 2023.

Federal Policy Priorities

1. College Health and Well-being Index (CHI) creating legislation

Similar to the existing and widely used CDC [School Health Index](#) (SHI), a CDC CHI would help colleges improve the health and well-being of their campus community.

ACHA would like to see legislation, administrative action, and/or appropriation that would direct the CDC to develop and promote the use of a CHI, which would allow colleges to voluntarily use an evidence-based assessment to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their schools' health and safety policies and programs.

2. Reauthorization of the [Garrett Lee Smith \(GLS\) Campus Suicide Prevention Grant \(42 USC 6A §290bb–36b\)](#) funding

ACHA would like to see this important program fully funded in FY23 and reauthorized as part of any reauthorization of the Garrett Lee Smith Act. The program is currently authorized for \$7 million per fiscal year through FY22.

As part of the reauthorization, we would like the program to include CDC requirements to gather data and report to Congress on the status of college student mental health and college mental health services.

3. Appropriations bill/report provisions that would:

- A. Allow Congress to gather data to evaluate the current health situation of college students and efforts to improve/address such data gathering.
- B. Advance health-promoting environments and health practices and policies on issues such as public safety, infection control, reproductive health, and prevention of high-risk alcohol use and other drug abuse, tobacco use, sexually transmitted illness, interpersonal violence, sexual assault and harassment, suicide, and discrimination of all types.
- C. Educate students on navigating the health care system and aid with the transition from parent-guided care to self-care.
- D. Set up systems to benchmark services and measure the impact of specific services on the health of college communities and the academic goals of colleges.

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- E. Advance college collaboration with community and campus partners to create a network of care and leverage available resources. Campus partners may include but are not limited to disability services, athletics, recreational sports, housing, and academic departments.

4. Public health/prevention

ACHA would like to see and will support federal measures that:

- A. Assist in national efforts to promote public health/prevention in emerging adults, such as targeted efforts to evaluate the current health situation of college students and efforts to improve/address such. Examples include:
 - i. Funding and other support to integrate campus services with community services/resources
 - ii. Increasing vaccination rates in under-vaccinated or vulnerable populations
- B. Study health disparities within college populations
- C. Evaluate college health initiative effectiveness

117th Congressional Legislation which ACHA would Support if Reintroduced

Bills that fall within our Policy Platform, such as:

Basic Assistance for Students In College (BASIC) Act ([S 2004/HR 3857](#))

Sponsored by Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA), it would fund college efforts to identify and meet the basic needs of students, including food, housing, transportation, and health care.

END Stigma Act ([HR 868](#))

Sponsored by Rep. Madeleine Dean (D-PA), it would award grants to colleges to develop programs that 1) Educate students suffering from substance use disorder on their treatment options; 2) Reduce the stigma with respect to substance use disorder; and 3) Refer students to substance use disorder treatment providers and facilities.

Enhancing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Through Campus Planning Act ([HR 5407/S 4970](#))

Sponsored by Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA), it would require the US Department of Education to coordinate with the US Department of Health and Human Services to encourage colleges to develop and implement comprehensive mental health and suicide prevention plans.

College mental health services commission bill, “Higher Education Mental Health Act” ([HR 5654/S 3048](#))

Sponsored by Rep. David Trone (D-MD), it would require the US Department of Education to establish an Advisory Commission on Serving and Supporting Students with Mental Health Disabilities in Institutions of Higher Education.

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Other Ideas for Consideration

- 1. Targeted efforts to address/study/improve the health and well-being of emerging adults**
As the benefits of similar targeted efforts for adolescents have shown, comparable efforts should be made for emerging adults. Emerging adults are often making decisions connected to their health and well-being for the first time by themselves. This is an important time in their lives to inform and craft healthy lifestyles, and thus there should be efforts targeted toward this cohort to study and encourage beneficial practices and prevent unhealthy behaviors from taking root.
- 2. Congressional College Health and Well-Being Caucus and/or Emerging Adult Health and Well-Being Caucus establishment**
Currently, no caucus aligns with college or emerging adult health and wellness, so we would work to create one.
- 3. Establishment of a College Campus Health and Well-being and/or Emerging Adult Week**
Establishing a week each year to commemorate and elevate issues of campus and/or emerging adults' health and well-being and those responsible on campus for addressing them.

Other Policy Areas of Particular Attention

- 1. US Department of Education's Final Title IX (sexual harassment and violence) Rule**
- 2. Sexual and reproductive health access post the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision**