

# Investing in Your Health – Addressing California’s Youth Mental Health Challenges

## Mental health is an essential part of overall health and well-being.

California’s health plans support state and federal laws requiring parity for mental health and physical health coverage. Despite systemic workforce and provider shortages, we’ve taken a number of positive steps to strengthen California’s mental health care system for California’s youth.

California’s youth have experienced major disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, including school closures and social isolation. California’s health plans are working to find solutions to address the mental health needs of children and adolescents with a range of innovative and collaborative resources, especially for suicide prevention. These resources include:



**Innovative programs helping equip teens with the tools to have meaningful conversations about mental health with their peers and their communities**, including tips for active listening, conversation starters, and resources.



**Funding for school and community programs** by providing access to clinicians in middle and high schools and training educators to spot signs of mental health issues.



**Offering access to mental health services for Los Angeles County’s 1.3 million K-12 public school students** through a historic partnership with the L.A. County Office of Education, the L.A. County Department of Mental Health, and a telehealth partner to make mental health support available for all students, resulting in shorter wait times, earlier intervention, and connecting students with qualified therapists at no cost.



**Supporting California’s Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative**, designed to bring prevention, early intervention, and treatment to schools and other settings where youth are served.

**Health plans understand** there is more we must all do to meet the mental health needs of California’s youth, and will continue to invest in the resources needed to help meet this growing demand. By working **collaboratively**, with a spirit of shared responsibility, **health plans, providers, state leaders, and advocates can effectively address the mental health challenges in California, save lives and improve the mental and physical well-being of all Californians.**

