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**BERMAN**

ASSEMBLY MEMBER

PRESS RELEASE



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## **Berman Introduces Legislation to Offer Free Suicide Prevention Training for K-12 Schools**

*AB 2003 builds upon a proven model to provide access to essential, lifesaving resources for the entire school community.*

**SACRAMENTO** – Today Assemblymember Marc Berman (D-Menlo Park) introduced AB 2003, desperately needed legislation to permanently provide free online suicide prevention training statewide.

“Too many communities across California have been devastated by youth suicides, including my hometown of Palo Alto. We must do everything we possibly can to prevent these tragedies,” **said Assemblymember Marc Berman.** “AB 2003 will provide life-saving suicide prevention training for all K-12 students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Suicide is preventable, and this training is essential to give Californians the knowledge, tools, and resources to know what to look for and feel confident in supporting youth in their life who need help.”

Suicide remains the second-leading cause of death for youth ages 10-25 in California, and rates have increased over the last two decades. Year after year, more youth die by suicide than motor vehicle accidents.

“The Commission for Behavioral Health is proud to partner with Assemblymember Berman on AB 2003, a bill that champions our extensive policy recommendations for suicide prevention and school behavioral health. This represents a significant milestone in our shared vision for youth well-being,” **said Al Rowlett, Chair of the Commission for Behavioral Health.**

AB 2003 builds upon a previous online suicide prevention training program offered to middle and high school students and staff that ran from June 2020 to December 2024. The funding for the training program was secured by Assemblymember Berman through the budget in 2018.

This previous training reached more than 20,000 middle and high school students and staff in California and the results were overwhelmingly positive. After completing the training, 98% of staff and 95% of students felt confident in their ability to help someone who might be considering suicide. 96% of students reported knowing how to access resources if they were

struggling with thoughts of suicide. Many participants – about 1 in 4 students and staff – already had someone in mind to whom they could apply their new life-saving skills.

“With the ongoing youth mental health crisis continuing across California and the nation, AB 2003 is urgently needed to provide our students and educators with the skills and tools to ensure safe and early access to critical mental health supports. Thanks to Assemblymember Berman for his ongoing support for the mental health and wellbeing of California’s young people,” **Steven Adelsheim, MD, Director of the Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing.**

In addition to providing permanent training, AB 2003 will also ensure that critical data from suicide risk screenings are made available to help identify trends and disparities, inform targeted interventions, and strengthen suicide prevention strategies across California. While many schools currently conduct these screenings, the results are not systematically shared, creating gaps in understanding student needs and limiting the development of effective, targeted support, even as youth suicide remains a major public health concern.

AB 2003 will provide free access to life-saving training and the essential data needed to combat the youth suicide crisis. It equips communities with the tools and insights to identify and support vulnerable youth effectively, ensuring no one falls through the cracks.

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*Assemblymember Marc Berman represents the 23<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District, which includes southern San Mateo County and northern Santa Clara County in the heart of the Silicon Valley. Website of Assemblymember Marc Berman: [www.assembly.ca.gov/Berman](http://www.assembly.ca.gov/Berman). Assemblymember Marc Berman’s official headshot is available [here](#).*

*The Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, known as the Commission for Behavioral Health (CBH) champions the wellbeing for all Californians through behavioral health prevention and intervention, including mental health and substance use disorders. By working with community partners, individuals with lived experience, family members, State agencies, and the Legislature we help to increase public understanding, catalyze best practices, and inspire innovation.*