



PRESS RELEASE

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Cutting Funding to School Mental Health Services Threatens Essential Support for Pennsylvania's Children

Pennsylvania – May 28, 2025 – The Strong Minds, Bright Futures Partnership strongly urges the Department of Education to reconsider the decision to cut \$1 billion in federal grants supporting school-based mental health services. These cuts will leave more than 250,000 students across Pennsylvania without essential mental health support, especially in communities already struggling with access. Families will lose access to critical school counselors, social workers, and programs designed to support student well-being and prevent youth suicide. These cuts will also reduce resources for addressing trauma and depression in children, making it harder to identify and support our children's healthy development.

Such cuts threaten vital services for children and should be considered essential, not expendable, and must not be categorized as waste or excess. They also highlight the instability of the child mental health system, which relies on temporary funding that fails to provide lasting support. The Strong Minds, Bright Futures Partnership remains committed to advocating for a reformed mental health system that provides long-term, sustainable funding to ensure children's mental health services are always available.

In addition to the public statement, the Strong Minds, Bright Futures Partnership is offering the Partnership's co-chairs **Marcus Allen** (CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters), and **Tina Clymer** (Administrator at Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health and Developmental Services), as well as local partners, for additional comment, background information, or interviews regarding the local implications of these cuts and the partnership's efforts to ensure the continued availability of mental health services in schools.

WHAT: The Strong Minds, Bright Futures Partnership is urging the U.S. Department of Education to reverse its decision to cut \$1 billion in federal grants supporting school-based mental health services, which will affect over 250,000 students across Pennsylvania, leaving them without access to critical mental health support, such as school counselors, social workers, and suicide prevention programs.

WHO: David Heayn-Menendez, Senior Advisor for Communications at Children First, Marcus Allen, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Tina Clymer, Administrator at Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health and Developmental Services, along with local partners, are available for interviews.

WHEN: The Department of Education's decision to cut funding has already been made, but the Partnership is calling for immediate action to reconsider the cuts before they impact the lives of Pennsylvania's children in the upcoming school year.

WHERE: The cuts will affect 36 schools and 250,000 students across Pennsylvania, in rural, urban, and suburban regions but the impact will be particularly felt in communities that are already struggling with limited access to mental health services.

WHY THIS MATTERS: These cuts threaten vital services for children, including mental health screenings, trauma support, and suicide prevention. As Pennsylvania's youth continue to face increasing mental health challenges, these reductions will only worsen the crisis, leaving thousands of children without the support they desperately need. The Strong Minds, Bright Futures Partnership is committed to advocating for sustainable, long-term mental health funding to ensure that all children have access to the care they deserve.

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ABOUT STRONG MINDS, BRIGHT FUTURES: Strong Minds, Bright Futures is a statewide partnership of over 60 organizations dedicated to improving youth mental health across Pennsylvania by advocating for policy changes, expanding mental health services, and supporting families. Learn more at www.strongmindspa.org, and follow us on Facebook and BlueSky @StrongMindsPA and on Instagram @PaStrongMinds.

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For more information or to schedule interviews, David Heayn-Menendez at 267-361-7945 or davidhm@childrenfirstpa.org

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