

**AAP Headquarters**

141 Northwest Point Blvd
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1019
Phone: 847/434-4000
Fax: 847/434-8000
E-mail: kidsdocs@aap.org
www.aap.org

Reply to**Department of Federal Affairs**

Homer Building, Suite 400 N
601 13th St NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202/347-8600
Fax: 202/393-6137
E-mail: kids1st@aap.org

Executive Committee**President**

Thomas K. McInerny, MD, FAAP

President-Elect

James M. Perrin, MD, FAAP

Immediate Past President

Robert W. Block, MD, FAAP

Executive Director/CEO

Errol R. Alden, MD, FAAP

Board of Directors**District I**

Carole E. Allen, MD, FAAP
Arlington, MA

District II

Danielle Laraque, MD, FAAP
Brooklyn, NY

District III

David I. Bromberg, MD, FAAP
Frederick, MD

District IV

Francis E. Rushton, Jr, MD, FAAP
Beaufort, SC

District V

Marilyn J. Bull, MD, FAAP
Indianapolis, IN

District VI

Pamela K. Shaw, MD, FAAP
Kansas City, KS

District VII

Kenneth E. Matthews, MD, FAAP
College Station, TX

District VIII

Kyle Yasuda, MD, FAAP
Seattle, WA

District IX

Stuart A. Cohen, MD, MPH, FAAP
San Diego, CA

District X

Sara H. Goza, MD, FAAP
Fayetteville, GA

February 21, 2013

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Napolitano:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I write to express our support for the *Mental Health in Schools Act of 2013* (H.R. 628).

More than 20 percent of children and adolescents have mental health problems, but of those affected, only 21 percent actually receive needed mental health services. Meanwhile, school violence, high dropout rates, bullying, high suicide and homicide rates, and increased levels of high-risk behaviors are reported commonly across the United States. Untreated mental health disorders lead to higher rates of juvenile incarcerations, school dropout, family dysfunction, drug abuse, and unemployment. School-based mental health programs offer the promise of improving access to diagnosis of and treatment for the mental health problems of children and adolescents.

The *Mental Health in Schools Act* advances the work of the Safe Schools-Healthy Students program in order to provide access to more comprehensive school-based mental health services and supports. The bill would require that programs funded under this section assist children in dealing with trauma and violence, an important component to building children's resiliency against toxic stress. Furthermore, the bill encourages community partnerships among families, students, law enforcement agencies, education systems, mental health and substance use disorder service systems, welfare agencies, physicians, faith-based programs, trauma networks, and other community-based systems, promoting a public health approach to the delivery of mental health services.

The AAP appreciates your commitment to the mental health and well-being of the nation's children and adolescents. We are pleased to support the *Mental Health in Schools Act*, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the health of all our nation's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas K. McInerny MD".

Thomas K. McInerny, MD, FAAP
President