

Resolution on Promoting Eating Disorder Resources for Youth in Schools

WHEREAS nationwide, 22% of adolescents show signs of disordered eating (2023 JAMA Pediatrics study) such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa – which disproportionately affect people of color and LGBTQ+ youth. Eating disorders remain the deadliest mental illness and are linked to long-term physical and mental damage, yet the majority of cases remain undiagnosed in school settings. Additionally, not many resources are found at middle schools, high schools, and college institutions to support students going through eating disorders, despite the fact that eating disorders can develop at 12 years old. Many counselors and therapists at public school sites are not equipped with the resources to aid and recognize struggling students, and eating disorders remain a socially stigmatized disease, discouraging students from seeking help;

WHEREAS the Democratic party introduced in 2019 and 2023 The Nutrition Counseling Aiding Recovery for Eating Disorders Act (also known as the Nutrition CARE Act), providing Medicare coverage of Medical Nutritional Therapy for individuals with an eating disorder - affirming the Democratic party's support in providing quality eating disorder services;

WHEREAS the newly passed “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” plans to cut Medicaid funding, potentially diminishing access for low-income families to quality healthcare and services, including psychiatric help for eating disorder patients;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Clara County Democratic Party supports increased resources and efforts to reduce eating disorders among youth in Santa Clara County, including by asking the Santa Clara County Office of Education to:

1. Provide ample evidence-based eating disorder education in K-12 schools by utilizing resources provided by NEDA (National Eating Disorders Association) – including an eating disorder screening test and a toolkit for educators/coaches.
2. Raise awareness of this disease to many youth in hopes of de-stigmatization through the forms of online campaigns and encouraging open discussions in classroom settings;
3. Support efforts and allocate funds towards eating disorder resources in communities and schools, through the form of accessible therapy and psychiatrists to aid youth;
4. Promote early intervention through routine mental health screenings, partnerships with local healthcare providers;
5. Perform targeted outreach to under-served populations disproportionately impacted by eating disorders, including BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth; and
6. Advocate on a greater level for healthcare and mental health resources amidst potential funding cuts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Members of Congress who represent any part of Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara County Office of Education.

Submitted by Ellie Hion and Katie Hion