



June 29, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman,
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member,
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

On Tuesday, June 30, the House Energy & Commerce Committee is holding a hearing entitled “High Anxiety and Stress: Legislation to Improve Mental Health During Crisis.” During the hearing, the Committee will consider the Behavioral Intervention Guidelines Act of 2019 (H.R. 3539). I am writing today to express Columbus State University’s full support for this legislation.

The BIG Act would require the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to develop best practices for schools to create behavioral intervention teams; experts responsible for identifying individuals of concern and addressing associated behavioral health issues to prevent harm to the individual or others.

Columbus State University’s Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) is a group committee dedicated to educating the community about proper responses to any behavioral issues, from concerning behavior to a crisis situation. Our expertise and experiences over the course of the program has allowed us to assist countless students through challenging times in their lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only added to the stresses and challenges many CSU students were already facing, a fact that is certainly not unique to our university. We strongly support the creation of best practices for behavioral intervention teams so colleges and universities without established programs can begin providing their students with the best possible mental health resources.

Members of Columbus State University’s BIT and counseling services have not only found their work to be rewarding, but also highly successful in helping students through stressful, and sometimes dangers, situations. We would be happy to provide the Committee with more information or details about our program and process.

If you have any questions for me or my experts please reach out to our coordinator in Washington, Lindsay.Austin@troutman.com (202)253-7269

Sincerely,

Dr. Chris Markwood
President
Columbus State University
Columbus, Georgia