

Nicholas Judd

SB19-010 Professional Behavioral Health Services For Schools

quantitative social value of reduced substance abuse or mental illness is not readily apparent to the average student or their family.

In economic terms, this obscurity causes consumers to underestimate the service's overall value, therefore producing a socially suboptimal demand. Underestimation cannot be corrected by the market alone, given the lack of property rights or defined market transactions for such benefits. In such cases, it is the duty of the government to induce an efficient level of services through subsidization. We will now discuss the social benefits that counseling provides, first by discussing current societal costs, then how counseling would reduce their impact.

Currently, substance abuse is subsidized. This is due to the fact that the government provides financial support for various programs and services aimed at reducing the impact of substance abuse. This support is often in the form of grants, subsidies, or direct funding to various organizations and agencies. The government's role in subsidizing substance abuse treatment and prevention programs is a key factor in addressing the societal costs associated with substance abuse.

productivity (Wang 2003, Ekman 2013). Such losses accrue only to the individual and therefore do not represent a negative externality.

Nonetheless, mental health disorders, including suicide, transfer costs to other members of society. Findings by Shepard et. al. (2016) suggest that the average suicide or suicide attempt generates \$44,062 in costs, inflation-adjusted, through emergency and inpatient hospitalization, ambulance transport, and medical investigation, as well as nursing home, physician, and follow up care. These costs burden the individual, but also families, who must pay for such services after a suicide or suicide attempt, and other members of society, who pay taxes and insurance which help fund such services. Shepard et. al. also miss the emotional costs borne by those who knew the victim. Such a significant loss can reduce quality of life in relatives and significant others for long periods of time, sometimes culminating in their own suicides (Pompili 2013).

SB19-010 would reduce societal costs by impacting both substance abuse and mental health. Current literature suggests that behavioral counseling can reduce levels of substance abuse in students (Terry-McElrath et. al. 2005, Lohrmann et. al. 2005, Anderson & Moore 2009). The American Academy of Pediatrics also endorses school counseling over drug testing and other methods of substance abuse reduction (“AAP”, 2015). In the same publication, it is suggested that fewer than 10% of adolescents with a substance use disorder receive any treatment, and that “using limited resources to provide advice, counseling, and even on-site treatment of adolescents could both serve a preventive role and increase the number of adolescents who have their substance use disorders addressed.” Thus, the mitigation of substance abuse through school behavioral counseling would spread benefits across society.

Additionally, school behavioral counseling has been cited as an important factor in youth suicide prevention. For example, Aseltine et. al. found that a counseling intervention program, run on random samples of high school students in Georgia, Massachusetts and Connecticut, reduced the likelihood of a reported a suicide attempt in the past 3 months by 40%, when

SB19-010 would reduce this barrier through a form of indirect redistribution. The grant allocated in the bill generates a greater provision of school-sponsored counseling programs. Therefore, the cost burden of these services is reduced for students and their families. By subsidizing counseling programs through educational facilities, SB19-010 would reduce the financing barrier and increase the utilization of behavioral health services.

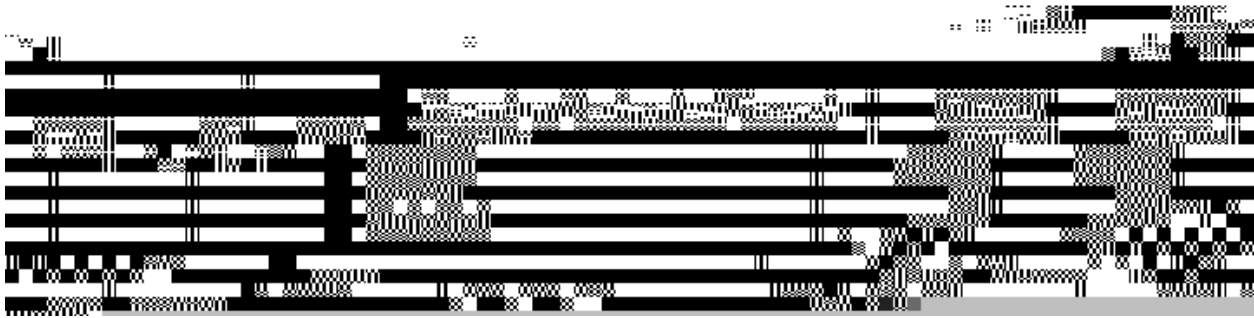
Additionally, barriers constituted by social stigma and parental acceptance would be reduced as well. By expanding access to school counseling, students are less likely to require approval or financing by their parents. This would also increase service utilization, as students who feel restrained by these factors are provided an alternate route to behavioral health services.

Finally, the grant provided in SB19-010 would help reduce informational asymmetry. Some students do not enroll in counseling because they are being becauseMMM

Appendix

Colorado
 Department of State Services
 Substance Abuse and Addiction

		6,211.3	84.3
Juvenile Justice	201,810.4	167,594.0	83.0
Judiciary	13,777.8	111,671.3	84.9
Education (Elementary/Secondary)	2,504.3	304.3	14.6
3.4	77.0	289,982.2	30.4
2.7	61.0	284,174.0	161,258.3
1.2	33.92	171,725.8	
		1,211.7	26,802.8



Total State Budget	10,727 M
Elementary and Secondary Education	\$2,504 M
Substance Abuse and Addiction	\$1,673 M
Medicaid	\$1,265 M
Higher Education	\$1,750 M
Transportation	\$607 M

Work Cited

AAP opposes school drug tests; calls for counseling instead. (2015). *Brown University Child & Adolescent Behavior Letter*, 31(6), 3–4. <https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/cbl.30046>

Anderson, S. W., & Moore, P. A. (2009). The Impact of Education and School-Based Counseling on Children’s and Adolescents’ Views of Substance Abuse. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 18(1), 16–23. <https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/15470650802526526>

Aseltine, R. H., James, A., Schilling, E. A., & Glanovsky, J. (2007). Evaluating the SOSsuicide prevention program: A replication and extension. *BMC Public Health*, 7(1). doi:10.1186/1471-2458-7-161

- Bathje, G. J., & Pryor, J. B. (2011). The Relationships of Public and Self-Stigma to Seeking Mental Health Services. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 33(2), 161–176.
<https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.17744/mehc.33.2.g632039274160411>
- Ekman, M., Granström, O., Omérov, S., Jacob, J., & Landén, M. (2013). The societal cost of depression: Evidence from 10,000 Swedish patients in psychiatric care. *Journal of Affective Disorders*,