

A resolution of the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) calling for a university-wide effort to make mental health a top priority and to instate \$0 co-pays for all mental health services.

Authored by:

GPSG Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

Whereas, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported in 2019 that mental health disorders are the single largest cause of disabilities in the world and WHO reported that suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds.^{i, ii}

Whereas, the latest CDC survey reported that young adults are at an increased risk for mental health issues with 62.9% reporting symptoms of anxiety and/or depression and a quarter having "seriously considered suicide" during the Covid-19 pandemic.^{iii, iv}

Whereas, graduate and professional programs create high-stress and demanding environments, which increase the likelihood of mental health issues and substance use.^{v, vi}

Whereas, Duke graduate and professional students come from a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds including a large community of international students.

Whereas, the Duke Student Medical Insurance Plan (SMIP) is often the only option available to low-income and international students.

Whereas, Duke Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) has a one-semester counseling limit per student and the Duke SMIP has a \$10 co-pay per appointment for in-network counseling services outside of CAPS.

Recognizing, the tragic loss of UNC students to mental health issues this fall.^{vii}

Recognizing, the recent Nature article called "Mental health of graduate students sorely overlooked".^{viii}

Recognizing, the Duke Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) re-evaluates the SMIP every 3 years, and the next round of negotiations will take place in spring 2022.

Now, therefore be it resolved by the GPSG that the graduate and professional student body of Duke University:

Calls, for Duke to acknowledge the student mental health crisis at Duke and to recognize the counseling services currently in place are insufficient and inadequate to meet student needs.

Calls, on Duke administration to make mental health a top priority by, first and foremost, listening to students and actionably responding to them.

Calls, for \$0 co-pays for all mental health services in the next renewal of the SMIP.

Calls, for the expansion of current student mental health resources, including those specifically for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

Calls, for the review of all university policies which may be detrimental to the mental health of the students.

Calls, for the establishment of new university policies to advocate for students' mental health and well-being.

Calls, for a student referendum on this resolution.

References:

ⁱ https://www3.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15481:mental-health-problems-are-the-leading-cause-of-disability-worldwide-say-experts-at-paho-directing-council-side-event&Itemid=72565&lang=en

ⁱⁱ https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab_1

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/24/well/family/young-adults-mental-health-pandemic.html>

^{iv} https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab_1

^v <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnins.2021.593562/full>

^{vi} <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11469-020-00431-9>

^{vii} <https://abc7chicago.com/student-suicides-mental-health-unc-university-of-north-carolina-at-chapel-hill/11112991/>

^{viii} <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01751-z>