



To: New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, *Chair of Committee on Education*
Subject: [S5198 - Eating Disorders Education in Schools](#)

Senator Mayer,

Eating disorders are a serious public health concern, but there is a general lack of information to navigate recovery or access evidence-based effective treatments. Eating disorders are on the rise and public literacy remains very low. Most people do not make the connection between mental health and eating disorders and view eating disorders as volitional behaviors. Eating disorders don't receive the same funding or consideration as other illnesses, despite their pervasive nature and deadly consequences of going untreated.

Eating disorders will affect 28 million Americans at some point in their lives and have the second highest mortality rate of any psychiatric illness behind opiate addiction. This is one death every 52 minutes. Beyond this, eating disorders can impact every part of a person's life. They can affect personal and professional relationships, cause medical complications, exacerbate existing conditions, and burden those affected with extreme financial costs and barriers to care. The financial costs of eating disorders extend past those waylaid onto families, and it's estimated that eating disorders cost the U.S. economy \$64.7 billion every year.

The average time it takes for someone from the start of symptoms of Anorexia Nervosa to seek care is 2.5 years and for Binge Eating Disorder is around 6 years. While there isn't an established window for early intervention for eating disorders, we know that seeking care within the first three years from onset of symptoms increases the likelihood of better outcomes in recovery. Early detection and encouraging help seeking behavior can shorten the gap of time between the onset of symptoms and the individual getting treatment.

This education and early intervention work can and should start in the classroom. Much like New York State requires education based around other mental health illnesses like depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicide, it should require comprehensive information be taught about the full spectrum of eating disorders - not just Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia. Given the committee's longstanding commitment to the education, and health and wellbeing of school-aged people in the state of New York, we ask that you pass New York State Senate Bill 5198 in its entirety. Please reach out to Connor Lillis at clillis@nationaleatingdisorders.org with any questions.

Name: _____

Address: _____

New York State Senator (if known): _____