

New Organization Aims to Improve Student Health and Life

The Center for Student Health and Life (CSHAL) Opens Doors and Releases First Survey of College Students

College & University Pressroom

ARLINGTON, Va.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Aiming to raise awareness of college student health and life issues in a meaningful and student-centric way, the Center for Student Health and Life (CSHAL) today announced its formation, as well as the results of a survey of college students from around the country, conducted via Facebook.

CSHAL (www.cshal.org), which earlier this month formally applied to the Internal Revenue Service for 501(c)(3) non-profit status, is dedicated to improving the health and wellness of students during their college years and beyond.

“We are determined to make a positive difference in the health and wellness of college students as they traverse the challenging terrain of the undergraduate experience and move on to graduate school or the first step in their careers,” said Jon Englund, CSHAL’s founding executive director. “And we are equally determined to tackle health and wellness issues in an open and transparent way, directly involving students from day one and continually soliciting student input via surveys, our Web site and through direct communication.”

Serena Unrein, executive director of the Arizona Students Association, and one of CSHAL’s founding board members, said, “There is no other national organization like CSHAL existing today, so it fills a real vacuum. We are glad that the organization is involving students in a meaningful way, and that CSHAL will raise awareness of the health issues students face in college.”

In addition to announcing its formation, CSHAL also released the results of its first “Improving Student Health” survey, conducted during the recent winter break using the social networking site Facebook. The survey, which received responses from more than 500 students at 31 colleges and universities across the country, looked to achieve three key goals:

- understanding how and why students interact with their health center;
- identifying new approaches and technologies that students themselves feel would improve this interaction; and
- hearing from students about their own perspectives on the health and wellness issues they face today.

Among the survey’s key findings were:

- 75 percent, or three in four students, have visited a campus health center during their college years;
- 68 percent, or slightly more than two in three students, chose the cell phone as their first or second choice to make an appointment at the health center, but many also would like the option of making an online appointment;
- A majority of students (56%) like the idea of storing their health records online, due to easier access and convenience with a vocal minority not liking the idea due to privacy and security concerns; and,
- While 64 percent, or nearly two in three students, believe that they are doing “very well” or “well” when it comes to “medical conditions,” 27.5 percent, or more than one in four students, felt that they were “poor” or “very poor” in managing stress. In addition, 29 percent responded that they are doing “poor” or “very poor” when it comes to exercise.

“In order to explore these findings further, our next project will be to conduct a focus group and then an online survey of college students on stress and exercise,” said Englund, the CSHAL executive director. “Based on our findings, we plan to distribute a list of short and hopefully creative recommendations on how to ease students’ anxieties.”

A link to the full survey results and an analysis of results can be found at <http://www.cshal.org/research-and-survey-data>. More about CSHAL’s mission and plans can be found at <http://www.cshal.org/faq>

Englund has experience working with colleges and universities through College Parents of America (CPA), www.collegeparents.org, where he collaborated with that organization’s president, James A. Boyle. Boyle will also serve on CSHAL’s board and, in fact, CSHAL will be located in the same office suite in Arlington, VA, just down the hall from CPA.

“Obviously, parents care deeply about and want to be active partners in support of the health, wellness and safety of their children in college, so CPA will continue to address and interpret those topics from a parent perspective,” said Boyle. “But there is a compelling need for a student-centric organization focused on health and other student life issues. The launch of CSHAL is the first step in a long journey toward achieving the unifying goal of schools and parents, to better serve student health and life needs so that these young adults can better attain academic success.”

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