

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1985 (Irwin) – As Amended April 23, 2026

Policy Committee:	Health	Vote:	16 - 0
	Higher Education		10 - 0

Urgency: No                      State Mandated Local Program: Yes                      Reimbursable: Yes

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the California State University (CSU), the office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges (CCCCO), and each private and independent institution of higher education (IHE) receiving state financial assistance, and requests the University of California (UC), on or before July 1, 2028, to identify and compile a list of mental health training programs for use by athletic coaches which cover, at a minimum, suicide prevention education. The bill also requires an IHE, and requests the UC, to require an athletic program coach to complete student mental health training as a condition of their employment, on or before July 1, 2028, and every two years thereafter.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund costs between approximately \$1.7 million and \$6.7 million for community college districts (CCDs), collectively statewide, to implement and provide required training.
- 2) One-time General Fund costs of an unknown amount, possibly in the tens of thousands of dollars, for the CSU, UC, and CCCCCO, collectively, to compile a list of appropriate mental health trainings.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Background.** Several studies suggest higher education student athletes suffer from poor mental health at an increasing rate, with a report published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine focused on United States student athletes over a 20-year span finding that suicide has become the second most common cause of death, after accidents. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), “more than 80% of coaches reported spending increased time addressing mental health concerns with their student-athletes compared with pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.” The author claims this bill “will ensure coaches are equipped with the tools to recognize signs of mental illness and behavioral distress in” student athletes and accomplishes this by requiring every coach at a college or university in California to complete a mental health training program as a condition of their employment.

- 2) **Related Legislation.** AB 1665 (Pacheco), of the current legislative session, requires an interscholastic athletic program coach at a high school, including a private school, to undertake regular pupil mental health training. AB 1665 is pending hearing in this committee.

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