

Developing a Collaborative Team Process to Promote Students’ Physical and Mental Wellbeing During Education Abroad

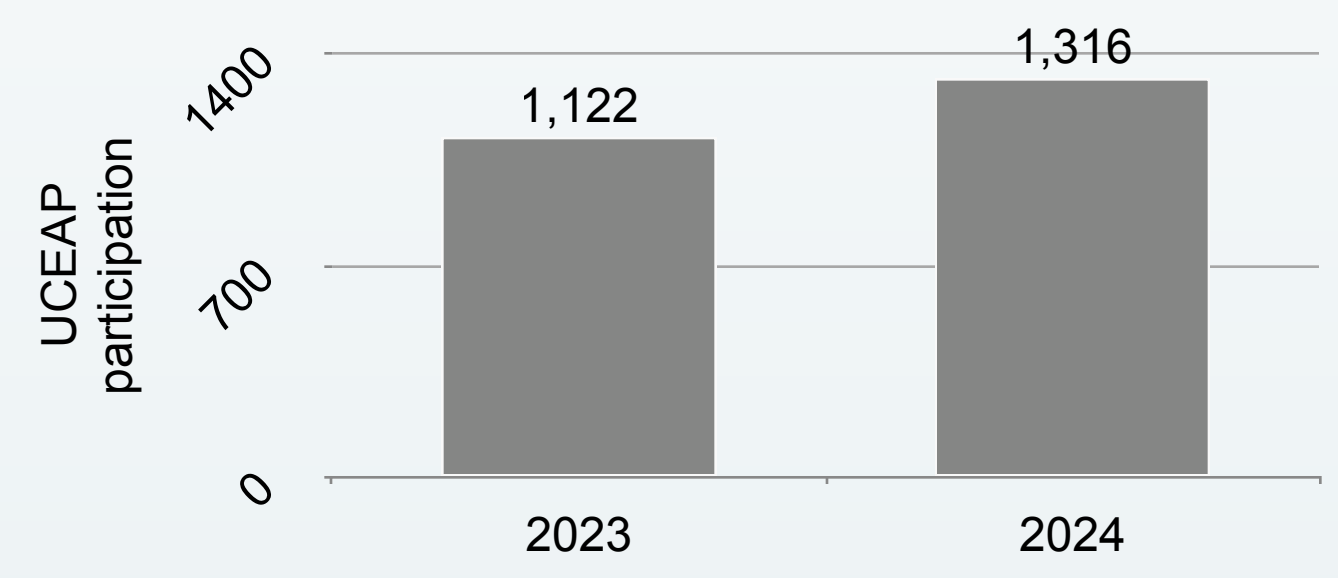
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Abstract

Studies show that there is an increase in mental health conditions in college aged students while also showing an increase in the number of students choosing to study abroad. The UC Berkeley Student Health Center Education Abroad Program team (EAP) has developed a streamlined process for both medical and mental health clearance to ensure students can safely study abroad. Additionally, this process allows us to identify those who may need assistance with additional resources while studying abroad.

UC Berkeley Specifics



All students studying abroad are required to have a health clearance completed.

- Our program is fee-based and available to all students regardless of insurance.
- Students who are experiencing financial hardship and qualify for the University’s Health Opportunity Fund (HOF) may use those funds to cover the fee.

Challenges students face:

- Finding healthcare outside of the university can be challenging for students, especially when navigating medical care for the first time.
- Students may need clearance but are unable to follow up with their own provider due to distance or change in insurance coverage.
- Appointments in primary care settings can have long waitlists.

Our Solution:

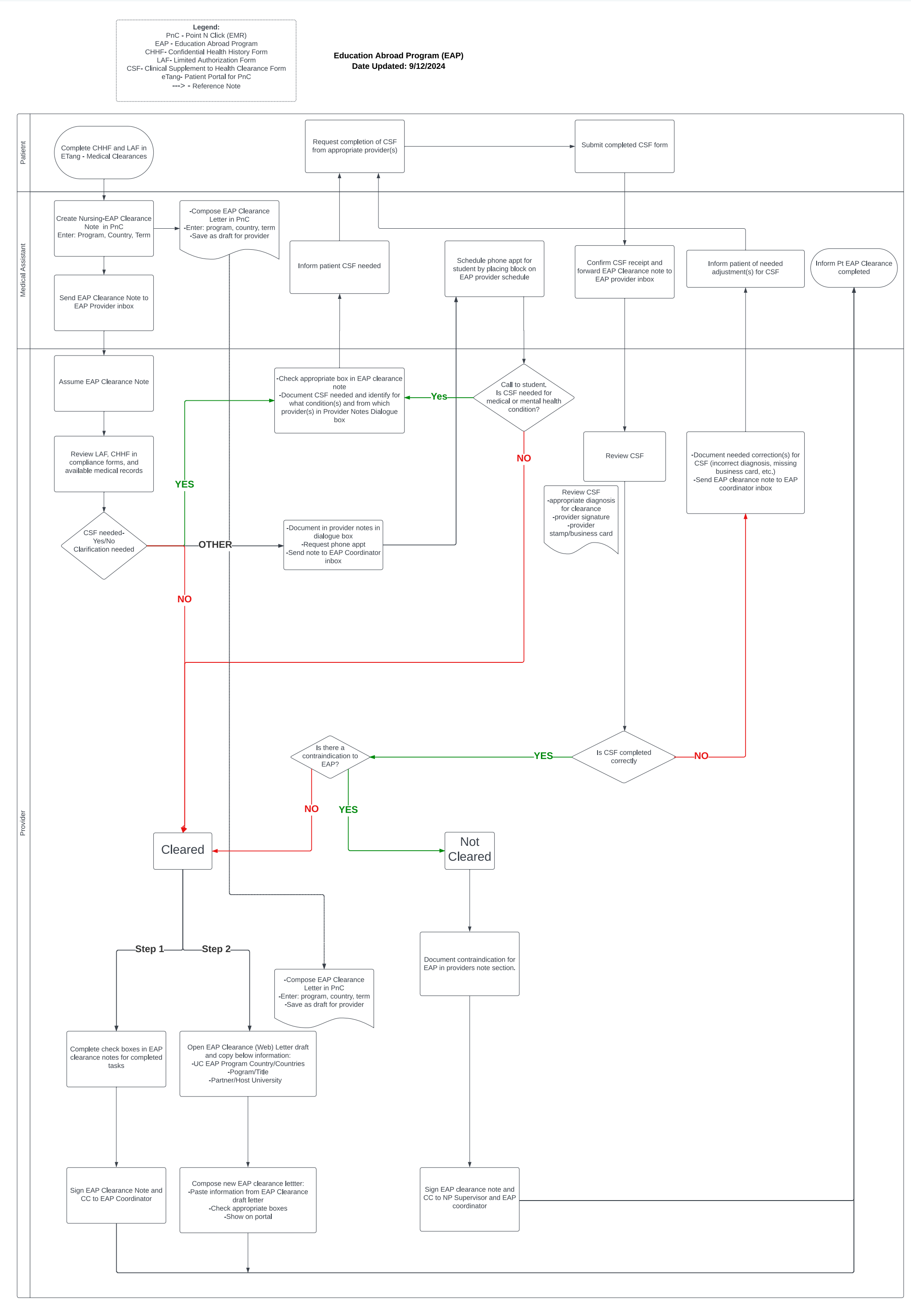
In collaboration with our Counseling staff we developed a screening tool for students who have not seen their provider in 6 months. If students meet the following criteria and are generally doing well, students can be cleared by EAP providers:

- Diagnosis of anxiety or depression
- No history of complex mental health conditions (e.g. bipolar disorder or schizophrenia)
- No history of hospitalization for mental health concern
- No history of suicidal gesture
- No active or recent suicidal ideation
- No history of Eating Disorders

A yes response to any of the above would require a referral to our Counseling and Psychological Services Department.

For students with Disordered Eating, if not connected to care, they will be screened by the EAP team lead and/or referred for evaluation by UC Berkeley’s Eating Disorder team.

UC Berkeley EAP Clearance Workflow



Conclusion

Anxiety and depression are extraordinarily common, especially in our student population. These conditions may vary in severity. Many students have mild or inactive symptoms or are no longer connected with a specialist. Our streamlined approach clears barriers and provides an easily accessible path to process required health clearances for students. As a collaborative team, we review clearances without bias, based on medical and mental health stability. This process creates an avenue for students to access care that would otherwise be unavailable prior to their study abroad program. The challenges of study abroad may exacerbate these conditions. Ultimately, timely processing of health clearances through our streamlined approach can assure our patients’ safe participation and wellbeing abroad.

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Contact Information

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Program Goals

- Identify** potential medical and psychiatric conditions that may need additional support or monitoring.
- Develop** a streamlined process to evaluate and clear students for education abroad.
- Implement** collaboration with behavioral support team for clearance with mental health conditions.