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SCR-54 National Mental Health Awareness Month. (2017-2018)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 54

CHAPTER 91

Relative to National Mental Health Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 27, 2017.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 54, Beall. National Mental Health Awareness Month.

This measure would recognize May 2017 as National Mental Health Awareness Month in California to enhance public awareness of mental illness.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Mental illness is one of the leading causes of disabilities in the United States, affecting one out of every four families and victimizing both the person with the illness and those persons who care for and love the person afflicted; and

WHEREAS, Serious mental illness costs Americans approximately \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year; and

WHEREAS, The National Institute of Mental Health has reported that many people suffer from more than one mental disorder at a given time and that 45 percent of those with any mental disorder meet criteria for two or more disorders, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDs, and cancer, and the severity of the mental disorder strongly relates to comorbidity; and

WHEREAS, Fifty-seven million Americans have a mental disorder in any given year, but fewer than 40 percent of adults living with a mental illness, and slightly more than one-half of youth 8 to 15 years of age, with a mental illness received mental health services in the last year; and

WHEREAS, Although mental illness impacts all people, many of those in lower-income communities receive less care, poorer quality of care, and often lack access to culturally competent care, thereby resulting in mental health disparities; and

WHEREAS, Some see negative perceptions about mental health care as a significant factor contributing to limited or nonexistent access to care, and some common concerns are stigma, culture, masculinity, exposure to violence, and lack of information and awareness, among many others; and

WHEREAS, According to the California Reducing Disparities Project report, being misdiagnosed and given severe mental health diagnoses can be stigmatizing and can affect the person's self-esteem, which, in turn, can discourage the person from seeking help; and

WHEREAS, The three major brain diseases, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression, adversely affect the economy, contribute to the rise of incarceration rates, and erode the quality of life for patients and their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Nearly two-thirds of all people with a diagnosable mental illness do not receive mental health treatment due to stigma, lack of community-based resources, inadequate diagnosis, or no diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 70 percent of all youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental health condition, and at least 20 percent live with severe mental illness that is usually undiagnosed, misdiagnosed, untreated, or ineffectively treated, thus leaving those detained in the juvenile justice system in a vulnerable condition; and

WHEREAS, There is a need to improve public awareness of mental illness and to strengthen local and national awareness of brain diseases, so that all those with mental illness may receive adequate and appropriate treatment that will result in their becoming fully functioning members of society; and

WHEREAS, Access to mental health treatment and services is of paramount importance; and

WHEREAS, There is a need to encourage primary care physicians to offer screenings, to partner with mental health care providers, to seek appropriate referrals to specialists, and to encourage timely and accurate diagnoses of mental disorders; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature wishes to enhance public awareness of mental illness; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California hereby recognizes May 2017 as National Mental Health Awareness Month in California to enhance public awareness of mental illness; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.