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ACR-29 Opioid epidemic. (2021-2022)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 29

CHAPTER 1

Relative to opioid epidemic.

[Filed with Secretary of State February 22, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 29, Voepel. Opioid epidemic.

This measure would designate the month of September 2021 as Opioid Awareness Month in California.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The opioid overdose epidemic continues to claim lives across the country with a record of 47,600 overdose deaths in 2017. This number represents 67.8 percent of the 70,237 overdose deaths from all drugs; and

WHEREAS, Eight-thousand-year-old hardened Sumerian clay tablets are the earliest prescriptions of opium with Ancient Greeks, Indians, Chinese, Egyptians, Romans, Arabs, people in middle ages, and Europeans from renaissance to now all prescribing opioids; and

WHEREAS, Wounded soldiers from the American Civil War, the British Crimean War, and the Franco-Prussian War, were allowed to abuse the drug. By the 1830s, one-third of all lethal poisoning was due to opium-marking, the first recognition of a social evil. Isolation of Morphine from opium by Serturner in Germany in 1805, hypodermic syringe by Pranez in the 1850s, synthesis of morphine by Tschudi in 1952, and manufacturing of synthetic derivatives called opioids and heroin eased the use; and

WHEREAS, Recognition of subjective pain as the fifth vital sign, with pressure on providers to prescribe scheduled medicines, added additional strokes to this menace of prehistoric dimensions—the opioid epidemic, which shreds 13 percent of high school seniors every year; and

WHEREAS, More Americans die every year now from drug overdose than in motor vehicle crashes. This crisis is taking an especially devastating toll on certain parts of the United States workforce. High rates of opioid overdose deaths have occurred in industries with high injury rates and physically demanding working conditions such as construction, mining, or fishing; and

WHEREAS, In April 2018, at the National Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit, National Institute of Health Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., announced the launch of the HEAL (Helping to End Addiction Long-term) Initiative, an aggressive, trans-agency effort to speed scientific solutions to stem the national opioid public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, Opioid treatment programs are housed in facilities that provide substance abuse treatment, which includes medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder. Medication-assisted treatment patients treated in opioid treatment programs must receive counseling, which can include different forms of behavioral therapy; and

WHEREAS, Millions of Americans are misusing opioids to relieve physical pain and Admiral Brett P. Giroir, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health at the United States Department of Health and Human Services stated that “we cannot solve the nation’s opioid crisis until we solve the nation’s pain crisis”; and

WHEREAS, Fifty million Americans suffer daily chronic pain, 20,000,000 of whom suffer from high-impact chronic pain that may lead to opioid misuse if they do not have access to appropriate pain management; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Health and Human Services has made improving pain management a key pillar of its Five-Point Strategy to Combat the Opioid Crisis and its Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force Report (Task Force report) issued in May 2019 addressing “acute and chronic pain in light of the ongoing opioid crisis.” There is a critical need for Californians to have access to the full range of pain management options listed in the Task Force report, especially those options with high-quality evidence, including neuromodulation, as an alternative to opioids; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby designates the month of September 2021 as Opioid Awareness Month in California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.