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ACR-75 Mental Health Awareness Month. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 75

CHAPTER 99

Relative to Mental Health Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 19, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 75, Ramos. Mental Health Awareness Month.

This measure would designate May 2023 as National Mental Health Awareness Month in California.

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 a mental disorder meet criteria for two or more disorders, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, and cancer. The severity of the mental disorder strongly relates to comorbidity; and

WHEREAS, Despite an overall decrease in the suicide rate in California, in 2020, youth, particularly Black, Latinx, and girls, all showed disproportionate increases in suicide. A shocking 78 percent of LGBTQ+ youth who were surveyed shared that they had considered suicide. The majority of those who had considered suicide shared that they had done so in the last year, and nearly one-third had made an attempt in the past year; and

WHEREAS, The UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland reported a 63-percent increase in children experiencing mental health emergencies in 2020 compared to 2019; and

WHEREAS, In October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association came together to declare a national state of emergency in children's mental health; and

WHEREAS, United States Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued an advisory in December 2021, a move reserved for the most urgent public health challenges, highlighting the COVID-19 pandemic's devastating impact on the already dire state of children's mental health; and

WHEREAS, In California, there are nearly 60,000 children in the foster care system, and many youth still exit care without the support and guidance they need to successfully transition; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that foster youth experience rates of homelessness ranging from 11 percent to 38 percent, disproportionately higher than that of the general population; 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, inclusive, 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 and 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, being misdiagnosed and given a severe mental health diagnosis can be stigmatizing and can affect the person's self-esteem, which, in turn, can discourage the person from seeking help; 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, 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 Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby recognizes May 2023 as National Mental Health Awareness Month in California to enhance public awareness of mental illness; and be it further

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