

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 120

Senators Bayer, Cherry, Geiss, Chang, Brinks, McCann, Wojno and Cavanagh offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to recognize May 2024 as Mental Health Awareness
2 Month.

3 Whereas, According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness
4 (NAMI), Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed nationwide
5 since May of 1949 as a way to raise awareness of the unique
6 challenges faced by individuals living with mental health
7 conditions, as well as recognize the efforts of the mental health
8 professionals and caregivers who stand by them throughout their
9 journey; and

10 Whereas, The National Institute on Mental Health (NIMH)
11 defines mental illness as a mental, behavioral, or emotional

1 disorder that can vary in impact, ranging from no impairment to
2 mild, moderate, and even severe impairment; and

3 Whereas, Mental illness impacts individuals in every community
4 of our state, regardless of age, economic status, sexual
5 orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality; and

6 Whereas, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
7 Administration (SAMHSA) documented, for the 2021 National Survey on
8 Drug Use and Health, that each year, 1 in 5 adults in the United
9 States experience mental illness, that 1 in 20 adults experience
10 serious mental illness, and 1 in 6 youths ages 6-17 experience a
11 mental health disorder; and

12 Whereas, According to the Centers for Disease Control and
13 Prevention (CDC), rates of mental illnesses such as depression have
14 been increasing in youths aged 6-17 since 2007. While high school
15 students who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual reported higher rates of
16 poor mental health than their heterosexual peers prior to the 2020
17 COVID-19 outbreak, data shows that the pandemic only exacerbated
18 their experiences with mental health challenges. This trend was
19 consistent for teenage girls when compared to teenage boys, with
20 girls being significantly more likely than boys to have poor mental
21 health before, and particularly throughout, the pandemic; and

22 Whereas, NAMI indicates that individuals living with mental
23 health conditions are more likely to experience cardiovascular and
24 metabolic diseases, substance use disorders, and unemployment.
25 Youths impacted by mental illness and mental, emotional, or
26 behavioral concerns are more likely to drop out of high school or
27 repeat a grade between the ages of 6-17 as well; and

28 Whereas, According to statistics collected by the CDC in 2021,
29 suicide was the eleventh leading cause of death overall in the

1 United States, claiming the lives of over 48,100 people. It was the
2 second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of
3 10-14 and 25-34, the third leading cause of death among individuals
4 between the ages of 15-24, and the fifth leading cause of death
5 among individuals between the ages of 35-44; and

6 Whereas, While much progress has been made to support
7 individuals living with a mental illness since the inception of
8 Mental Health Awareness Month, continued efforts to raise awareness
9 and understanding about the prevalence of mental illness, its
10 impacts, and the importance of mental health are crucial to
11 assisting those impacted live their everyday lives and maintain
12 recovery; and

13 Whereas, We must work together to educate our entire
14 population about what can be done to support the individual and
15 unique needs of those living with mental illness, eliminate the
16 stigma surrounding mental health conditions and seeking support
17 from mental health professionals, and recognize the impacts that
18 mental health has on individuals, families, and their communities;
19 now, therefore, be it

20 Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative
21 body recognize May 2024 as Mental Health Awareness Month. We
22 strongly support the efforts of national, state, and local
23 partners, and every citizen to actively engage in public and
24 private efforts to spread awareness about the importance of mental
25 health to the wellbeing of our communities; and be it further

26 Resolved, That we will take appropriate action and support one
27 another to recognize the many physical, emotional, and social
28 outcomes that mental illness impacts, and work to eliminate the
29 stigma surrounding mental illness and receiving care.