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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

SENATE RESOLUTION

COMMEMORATING MAY OF 2023, AS "MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH" IN
THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senators DiMario, F. Lombardi, Felag, Gu, Picard, Tikoian, Miller,
Sosnowski, Britto, and Zurier

Date Introduced: April 25, 2023

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling or
2 mood and every year, millions of Americans are faced with the reality and circumstances of
3 living with this condition; and

4 WHEREAS, Since 1949, Mental Health America, joined by organizations from across
5 the country, have led the observance of May as Mental Health Month, with the mission of raising
6 awareness and educating the public about mental health. This year marks its 74th Anniversary;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Mental Health Awareness Month strives to fight the stigma, attitudes, and
9 misconceptions that surround mental illnesses, and to provide support, educate the public, and
10 advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families; and

11 WHEREAS, One of the main reasons why individuals do not seek professional help is
12 due to the stigma that surrounds mental health. Individuals are afraid to seek the help and
13 treatment they need because they may be judged, ridiculed and shunned by others or they may
14 even judge themselves and resultantly, they often live in silence about their undiagnosed mental
15 health disorder; and

16 WHEREAS, Anyone can experience the challenges of mental illness regardless of their
17 background, age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or economic status; and

18 WHEREAS, Depression affects over 17.3 million people in the United States each year.
19 It is the number one cause of disability worldwide and the primary reason why a person dies of

1 suicide every fourteen minutes; and

2 WHEREAS, Suicide is the 12th leading cause of death in the United States and more than
3 45,900 people are dying by suicide each year; and

4 WHEREAS, The pandemic has had a disruptive impact on the lives of people worldwide,
5 with nearly 32.3 percent of adults in the United State reporting that their mental health has been
6 negatively impacted due to worry and stress over the virus, but for teenagers and young people,
7 particularly those in the LGBTQ+ community, the experience has been overwhelming,
8 accelerating an already worrying decline in their mental health and spurring a youth mental health
9 crisis; and

10 WHEREAS, Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people between the
11 ages of 15 and 24, and the resulting restrictions from the virus has precipitated an epidemic of
12 mental health conditions among children and young people; and

13 WHEREAS, Mental Health Awareness Month is a time to bring about change through
14 compassion, concern, open-mindedness, and understanding, and to celebrate the journeys of
15 resiliency and recovery of individuals living with mental illness; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby commemorates May
17 of 2023, as "Mental Health Awareness Month", and urges schools, businesses, government
18 agencies, and healthcare providers to commit to promoting and ensuring innovative prevention,
19 diagnosis, and treatment, and to spreading awareness through education programs and
20 understanding for mental health issues; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
22 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral
23 Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals and the Mental Health Association of
24 Rhode Island (MHARI).

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