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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER AS SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY AWARENESS MONTH
IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND CALLING FOR THE END OF STIGMA AND
EMPOWERING RECOVERY THROUGH LANGUAGE IN RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Giraldo, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Voas, Stewart,
Alzate, Potter, Cruz, Kislak, and Edwards

Date Introduced: May 22, 2025

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Substance use disorders (SUDs) are a public health issue that affect
2 thousands of Rhode Islanders and their families each year; and

3 WHEREAS, Stigma and discrimination remain significant barriers to individuals seeking
4 and accessing treatment and recovery support, often leading to negative health outcomes and
5 societal exclusion; and

6 WHEREAS, Language plays a powerful role in shaping public perceptions, attitudes, and
7 beliefs about individuals with SUDs, with evidence showing that person-first, non-stigmatizing
8 language fosters dignity, compassion, and understanding; and

9 WHEREAS, The American Medical Association, the World Health Organization, and
10 other leading health organizations advocate for replacing stigmatizing terms such as "addict,"
11 "abuser," and "clean" with person-first language such as "person with a substance use disorder"
12 and "in recovery"; and

13 WHEREAS, Communities, health professionals, and policymakers must work
14 collaboratively to create an environment where individuals with SUDs are treated with respect
15 and supported in their recovery journey; and

16 WHEREAS, Increasing public awareness of the impact of stigma and promoting the
17 adoption of respectful and inclusive language can contribute to improved outcomes for
18 individuals with SUDs and their families; and

19 WHEREAS, The statewide recovery advocacy workgroup represents individuals with

1 lived experience, recovery advocates, and key stakeholders and serves as an essential voice for
2 ensuring that policies are aligned with best practices and community needs; now, therefore be it

3 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
4 recognizes the urgent need to address stigma around substance use disorders and urges state
5 agencies, healthcare providers, educators, employers, media outlets, and community
6 organizations to adopt person-first, non-stigmatizing language in their practices, communications,
7 and policies; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That this House hereby supports statewide educational campaigns to raise
9 awareness of the role of stigma in perpetuating barriers to treatment and recovery, emphasizing
10 the power of inclusive language and the importance of evidence-based approaches to SUDs; and
11 be it further

12 RESOLVED, That all people are encouraged and welcome to attend the annual Recovery
13 Day Event at the Rhode Island State House on May 29, 2025; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
15 recognizes September as Substance Use Recovery Awareness Month in the State of Rhode Island
16 in order to highlight the importance of breaking down stigma, celebrating recovery, and
17 promoting mental health and wellness across the state; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
19 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Rhode Island,
20 Daniel J. McKee, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and the Rhode Island Department of
21 Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH).

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