

2022 -- H 8203

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

COMMEMORATING MAY OF 2022, AS "MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH" IN  
THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Kazarian, Carson, Fogarty, Cortvriend, Shekarchi,  
Blazejewski, Casimiro, Solomon, Giraldo, and McNamara

Date Introduced: May 03, 2022

Referred To: House read and passed

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 73rd 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 18 million people in the United States each year. It  
19 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 12<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States and more than  
3 47,000 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 45 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, accelerating  
8 an already worrying decline in their mental health and spurring a youth mental health crisis; and

9 WHEREAS, Before COVID-19 struck, approximately 1 in 5 adolescents worldwide was  
10 already living with mental health conditions and suicide was the third leading cause of death for  
11 teens between the ages of 15 and 19, and the resulting restrictions from the virus has precipitated  
12 an epidemic of 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 House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby  
17 commemorates May of 2022, as "Mental Health Awareness Month", and urges schools,  
18 businesses, government agencies, and healthcare providers to commit to promoting and ensuring  
19 innovative prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, and to spreading awareness through education  
20 programs and 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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