

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare October 10, 2022 as World Mental Health Day in the District of Columbia and to recognize the importance of mental health for District residents.

WHEREAS, the World Federation for Mental Health, an international organization founded to advance the prevention of mental and emotional disorders, the proper treatment and care of those with such disorders, and the promotion of mental health, first established World Mental Health Day on October 2, 1992 to raise awareness in the global community about actions that can support mental health;

WHEREAS, mental health has increasingly become a key issue for healthcare providers, policymakers, health advocates, and District residents;

WHEREAS, DC Health Matters Collaborative identified mental well-being as a priority for the District in its 2022 Community Health Needs Assessments;

WHEREAS, according to DC Health Matters, 11.4% of District adult residents reported having poor mental health days for more than 14 consecutive days, and 14.3% of the population has been diagnosed with a depressive disorder; moreover, the District has one of the highest rates of opioid abuse in the United States;

WHEREAS, a survey of DC youth found that 17% of high school students in the District reported having attempted suicide in 2017 – compared to about 7.4% nationally;

WHEREAS, mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which affects how we think, feel, act, handle stress, relate to others, and make choices;

WHEREAS, mental health is important at every stage of life, including childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and in old age;

WHEREAS, awareness of the need for mental health supports has increased, but stigma has remained, especially against those experiencing mental health disorders or substance use disorders;

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WHEREAS, stigma can worsen a person’s mental health by discouraging a person from seeking care and can make someone feel isolated and hopeless;

WHEREAS, building awareness mental health and mental health disorders, and ensuring there is wide and easy access to different types of mental health care services that are culturally responsive and trauma informed, is critical to combatting stigma;

WHEREAS, in the District, there is still a great need for increasing access to services that are equitably distributed throughout the District;

WHEREAS, barriers to mental health care include low socioeconomic status; cultural stigma; a shortage of qualified providers, especially in Wards 7 and 8; and challenges with insurance coverage;

WHEREAS, according to a 2016 report by the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) National Center for Health Workforce Analysis forecasts a shortage of psychiatrists; clinical, counseling, and school psychologists; mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) social workers; school counselors; and marriage and family therapists through 2025, which exacerbates the disparities in access to care;

WHEREAS, the theme for the 2022 World Mental Health Day, on October 10, 2022, is “Make Mental Health and Well-Being for All a Global Priority; and

WHEREAS, the District will continue to make District residents’ mental health and well-being a priority so that everyone can access the care they need.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this resolution be cited as the “World Mental Health Day Recognition Resolution of 2022”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes the importance of expanding access to mental health care, honors mental health providers who serve District residents every day, and declares October 10, 2022 as World Mental Health Day in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.