



2017 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 71

August 3, 2017 - Introduced by Senators JOHNSON, L. TAYLOR, LARSON, WIRCH and VINEHOUT, cosponsored by Representatives CROWLEY, GOYKE, VRUWINK, HEBL, ZEPNICK, FIELDS, CONSIDINE, ANDERSON, MASON, ZAMARRIPA, SARGENT, SPREITZER, BROSTOFF, HESSELBEIN, SUBECK, BERCEAU and C. TAYLOR. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** proclaiming July 2017 as Minority Mental Health Month.

2 Whereas, anyone can experience the challenges of mental illness regardless of
3 his or her background, but one's background and identity can make access to mental
4 health treatment much more difficult; and

5 Whereas, minorities have consistently faced more mental health issues than
6 the non-Hispanic white population; and

7 Whereas, minorities are less likely to receive diagnosis and treatment for their
8 mental illness, have less access to and availability of mental health services, and
9 often receive a poorer quality of mental health care; and

10 Whereas, only 25 percent of black people seek mental health help as compared
11 to 40 percent of white individuals; and

12 Whereas, African Americans living below the poverty level, as compared to
13 those more than twice above the poverty level, are three times more likely to report
14 psychological distress; and

1 Whereas, young Latino females are nearly twice as likely as males to think
2 about and to attempt suicide; and

3 Whereas, 2.3 percent of young black and Hispanic people sought mental health
4 help in a given year compared to 5.7 percent of young white people; and

5 Whereas, the concept of mental illness and beliefs about why and how it
6 develops have many different meanings and interpretations among Native
7 Americans. Physical complaints and psychological concerns are not distinguished,
8 and Native Americans may express emotional distress in ways that are not
9 consistent with standard diagnostic categories; and

10 Whereas, access to mental health services is severely limited by the rural,
11 isolated location of many Native American communities; and

12 Whereas, Native Americans are the most likely to die from suicide between the
13 ages of 15 to 24 compared to any other group of people; and

14 Whereas, language barriers make it difficult for Asian Americans to access
15 mental health services. Discussing mental health concerns is considered taboo in
16 many Asian cultures. Because of this, Asian Americans tend to dismiss, deny, or
17 neglect their symptoms; and

18 Whereas, nearly one out of two Asian Americans will have difficulty accessing
19 mental health treatment because they do not speak English or cannot find services
20 that meet their language needs; and

21 Whereas, relative to other U.S. populations, Asian Americans are three times
22 less likely to seek mental health services; and

23 Whereas, stigma, lack of cultural sensitivity, and unconscious and conscious
24 reluctance to address sexuality may hamper effectiveness of care; and

1 Whereas, LGBT individuals who keep their sexuality hidden are at an
2 increased risk of psychological distress. This also prevents them from accessing
3 group-based coping resources that buffer against the negative effects of stigma; and

4 Whereas, individuals who identify as LGBT have faced cases of providers
5 denying care, using harsh language, or blaming the patient's sexual orientation or
6 gender identity as the cause for an illness; and

7 Whereas, mental illness plays a role in 90 percent of suicides, and minorities
8 are far more likely to experience a mental health issue and difficulties getting
9 treatment; now, therefore, be it

10 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the legislature
11 hereby proclaims the month of July in 2017 as Minority Mental Health Month.

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(END)