2015 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 99

February 9, 2016 – Introduced by Senators L. TAYLOR, C. LARSON, LASSA, VINEHOUT and HARRIS DODD, cosponsored by Representatives A. OTT, BERCEAU, MASON, MILROY, SINICKI, SPREITZER, SUBECK and ZEPNICK. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

Relating to: Proclaiming November 2016 as Mental Health Screening Month in Wisconsin.

Whereas, in any given year, more than 61.5 million Americans experience mental illness; and

Whereas, mental illness is more common than cancer, diabetes, and heart disease; and

Whereas, it has been established that between 70 percent and 90 percent of persons with a mental illness experience a significant reduction of symptoms and an improved quality of life when properly treated; and

Whereas, with adequate treatment, nearly 60 percent of Americans experiencing a mental illness live productive lives; and

Whereas, there are often long delays between the first appearance of diagnosable symptoms and when individuals seek help, and this delay can have permanent consequences, including suicide, brain damage, and lost relationships; and
Whereas, the impact of untreated mental illness has strained our criminal justice system, with around 20 percent of state and local prisoners found to have a recent history of a mental health condition and 70 percent of youth in juvenile justice systems experiencing at least one mental health condition; and

Whereas, it is irresponsible to continue to wait to treat mental illness through the criminal justice system, nor is it appropriate to treat the mentally ill as delinquents; and

Whereas, the legislature has an opportunity to engage the public about the serious consequences of unchecked mental illness by bringing awareness to and advocating for voluntary mental health screenings; and

Whereas, medical experts and mental health advocates have come together to reduce barriers to access mental health treatments, provide mental health services to at-risk individuals, and foster a national discussion regarding the benefits of preventative mental health screenings; it is important that the legislature join this national effort; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the legislature hereby proclaims November 2016 as Mental Health Screening Month in Wisconsin.

(END)