

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1242

Prioritizing mental health to the same degree as physical health to address the epidemics of suicide and drug overdose in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 17, 2024

Mr. THANEDAR (for himself, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. SOTO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

RESOLUTION

Prioritizing mental health to the same degree as physical health to address the epidemics of suicide and drug overdose in the United States.

Whereas mental health and physical health are inseparable;

Whereas mental health conditions require the same degree of attention as physical health conditions;

Whereas mental health and substance use parity requirements for health insurance plans must be firmly enforced;

Whereas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2022, 49,476 Americans lost their lives to suicide, and a reported 105,384 Americans lost their lives to drug overdoses in 2023;

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, mental health and many common mental disorders are significantly shaped by the social, economic, and physical environments in which people live;

Whereas social vulnerability, a metric that quantifies the impact of the social determinants of health on county-level populations, is directly associated with risk for adult suicide;

Whereas, according to research published in Addictive Behaviors Reports, adults with a history of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have a 4.3-fold higher likelihood of developing a substance use disorder;

Whereas cultural stigma against mental health disorders is an especially notable social determinant of mental health;

Whereas there is a growing body of research on the association between mental health stigma and suicidal actions, but more research must be done to identify a causal relationship;

Whereas cultural stigma against mental illness can lead individuals to engage in self-medicative practices, such as illicit drug use, instead of seeking out professional assistance;

Whereas, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), among adults aged 18 or older in 2021, those with serious mental illness (SMI) or any mental illness (AMI) were more likely than those without mental illness to have used illicit drugs in the past year (50.2 percent for SMI and 39.7 percent for AMI versus 17.7 percent for adults aged 18 or older with no mental illness);

Whereas, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 33.5 percent of United States adults with mental illness also experienced a substance use disorder in 2021, which is over, 19,400,000 individuals;

Whereas, according to a 2022 literature review of 38 studies on mental health and opioid overdose, nearly all reviewed studies found a connection between mental disorder and overdose;

Whereas, to prevent the perpetuation of this dangerous cycle, mental health education and awareness must begin from an early age, and school-based mental health resources must be better utilized and better funded to achieve this goal;

Whereas 1 in 5 children living in the United States experience a mental disorders every year, and an estimated 49.5 percent of adolescents had experienced a mental health disorder; and

Whereas mental illness stigma, and specifically self-stigma, is a significant barrier to mental health services for adolescents and adults that must be addressed: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) expresses support for parity between insur-
3 ance coverage of mental health and physical health
4 treatment, including full enforcement of existing
5 Federal laws concerning mental health parity;

6 (2) works to extinguish mental health stigmas
7 in the United States;

1 (3) supports the 2024 National Strategy for
2 Suicide Prevention;

3 (4) seeks to provide as many resources and
4 funds as possible to combat the epidemics of suicide
5 and drug overdose by—

6 (A) promoting Federal, State, Tribal, and
7 local initiatives to retain and expand the mental
8 health workforce;

9 (B) supporting access to and coverage of
10 medication-assisted treatment;

11 (C) adopting evidence-based suicide pre-
12 vention strategies;

13 (D) funding linguistically, culturally, and
14 age appropriate services;

15 (E) improving quality, coverage, and acces-
16 sibility of crisis care service; and

17 (F) highlighting health promotion cam-
18 paigns that utilize digital media to target ado-
19 lescents and young adults.

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