

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 657

Designating May 16, 2022, as “Older Americans Mental Health Awareness Day” to raise awareness of the mental health needs of older adults.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 26, 2022

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. BRAUN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating May 16, 2022, as “Older Americans Mental Health Awareness Day” to raise awareness of the mental health needs of older adults.

Whereas May 2022 is both “Older Americans Month” and “Mental Health Awareness Month”;

Whereas the population of individuals age 56 or older increased from 39,600,000 in 2009 to 54,100,000 in 2019 and is projected to reach 94,700,000 in 2060;

Whereas 20 percent of older adults suffer from a mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or serious mental illness;

Whereas older adults had a higher risk of suicide compared to other age groups in 2020. In fact, during that year—

(1) individuals age 85 or older had the highest rate of suicide among all age groups; and

(2) individuals age 75 to 84 had the second highest rate of suicide among all age groups.

Whereas, according to the American Psychological Association, older adults underutilize mental health services because of service constraints, limited awareness, or a stigma surrounding mental health;

Whereas the opioid crisis and the COVID–19 pandemic have negatively impacted the behavioral health of older adults;

Whereas aging could possibly lead to social and physical changes that may increase vulnerability to substance use disorders;

Whereas poor mental health and substance use disorders reduce life expectancy among older adults and increase the risk of adverse health outcomes and conditions, such as heart disease, dementia, and diabetes;

Whereas mental health disorders for older adults, especially depression and anxiety, are major contributors to and exacerbate social isolation;

Whereas mental health diagnoses drive spending in the Medicare and Medicaid programs for an already high-cost population;

Whereas spending for individuals with a mental health disorder is more than twice that for individuals who are eligible for both such programs without such a diagnosis;

Whereas more than one-tenth of individuals age 65 or older binge drink, which is defined as drinking 5 or more drinks on the same occasion for men or 4 or more drinks on the same occasion for women; and

Whereas by 2030, the United States will need 5,790 more geropsychologists to meet the needs of older adults in the United States, highlighting the need for outreach to increase availability of trained specialists: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates May 16, 2022, as “Older Americans Mental Health Awareness Day”;

3 (2) recognizes the unmet mental health and
4 substance use disorder needs of older adults;

5 (3) recognizes the need for a robust mental
6 health and substance use disorder workforce trained
7 in the unique needs of older adults to screen, assess,
8 and intervene as appropriate; and

9 (4) recognizes the need to advance bipartisan
10 solutions to address the mental health needs and
11 substance use disorder needs of older adults.
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