

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 292

Expressing the sense of Congress that Congress should adopt and implement the goals and recommendations provided by the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health through legislation or other appropriate action to help ensure affordable, accessible, and high quality mental health care for all Americans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 2, 2003

Mrs. NAPOLITANO submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that Congress should adopt and implement the goals and recommendations provided by the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health through legislation or other appropriate action to help ensure affordable, accessible, and high quality mental health care for all Americans.

Whereas the National Institute of Mental Health has found that 22.1 percent of Americans ages 18 and older suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder each year;

Whereas the National Institute of Mental Health has found that 4 of the 10 leading causes of disability in the United States are mental disorders;

Whereas approximately 90 percent of the 30,000 people who commit suicide in the United States every year have a diagnosable mental disorder;

Whereas the President created the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health on April 29, 2002 to study the mental health service delivery system and make recommendations to enable people with serious mental illness to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities;

Whereas the Commission identified 6 goals to begin transforming mental health care in America: (1) to help all Americans understand that mental health is essential to overall health; (2) to make mental health care consumer and family driven; (3) to eliminate disparities in mental health services; (4) to make early mental illness screening, assessment, and referral to services common practice; (5) to ensure delivery of excellent mental health care and acceleration of mental illness research; and (6) to use technology to access mental health care and information;

Whereas the Commission has made a number of recommendations to Congress to implement its goals;

Whereas the Commission has recommended that to implement its first goal of helping Americans understand that mental health is essential to overall health, Congress should address mental health with the same urgency as physical health, as well as develop and advance a national strategy for suicide prevention and a national campaign aimed at reducing the stigma attached to seeking mental health care;

Whereas the Commission has recommended that to implement its second goal of making mental health care consumer and family driven, Congress should support the

practice of developing an individualized plan of care for every individual with a serious mental illness, encourage mental health care providers to involve consumers and families in the mental health system and the path toward recovery, take action to realign relevant Federal programs to improve consumer access and accountability for mental health services, support the States in developing extensive, coordinated mental health systems, and encourage the protection and enhancement of the rights of people with mental illness;

Whereas the Commission has recommended that to implement its third goal of eliminating disparities in mental health services, Congress should support improved access to quality care in rural and geographically remote areas and ensure that mental health care providers are trained to work effectively with culturally diverse populations;

Whereas the Commission has recommended that to implement its fourth goal of making early screening, assessment, and treatment of mental illness a common practice, Congress should help promote children's mental health by improving and expanding school mental health programs, encouraging screenings for mental disorders (including co-occurring substance use disorders) in primary health care, and supporting appropriate referral to treatment and integrated treatment strategies;

Whereas the Commission has recommended that to implement its fifth goal of ensuring the delivery of excellent mental health care and the acceleration of mental illness research, Congress should encourage the acceleration of research to promote recovery, cures, and prevention, the advance of evidence-based practices using dissemination and demonstration projects, the improvement and expan-

sion of the workforce which provides these services, and the development of a base of knowledge in understudied areas;

Whereas the Commission has recommended that to implement its sixth goal of using technology to access mental health care and information, Congress should encourage the use of health technology and telehealth to improve access and coordination of mental health care, particularly for Americans in remote areas or in underserved populations, and the development and implementation of integrated electronic health records; and

Whereas these goals are interrelated and must be pursued together as quickly as possible: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that Con-
 3 gress should act immediately to adopt and implement the
 4 goals and recommendations highlighted in the final report
 5 of the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental
 6 Health, “Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental
 7 Health Care in America” through legislation or other ap-
 8 propriate action to help ensure affordable, accessible, and
 9 high quality mental health care for all Americans.

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