

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. J. RES. 33

Recognizing the efforts of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services to address the stigma associated with mental health and substance use disorders.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 21, 2008

Mr. BROWN introduced the following joint resolution; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

JOINT RESOLUTION

Recognizing the efforts of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services to address the stigma associated with mental health and substance use disorders.

Whereas May is National Mental Health Month;

Whereas approximately 54,000,000 Americans suffer from mental illnesses and 26,000,000 from addictions, with a significant number living with co-occurring mental illnesses and addictions;

Whereas more than 2,000,000 Ohioans—nearly 1 in 5—experience some mental illness or emotional disturbance each year;

Whereas 910,000 Ohioans aged 12 and older suffered from alcohol or illicit drug dependence or abuse in 2006;

Whereas fewer than $\frac{1}{3}$ of adults and $\frac{1}{2}$ of children with a diagnosable mental disorder in the United States receive any mental health services in a given year;

Whereas only an estimated 10.8 percent of those with drug or alcohol use disorders in the United States in 2006 received treatment;

Whereas a significant number of Ohioans with addictions in 2006 did not receive treatment, including an estimated 236,000 individuals aged 12 and older with illicit drug addictions and an estimated 695,000 individuals with alcohol use disorders;

Whereas the cost of the consequences of untreated mental illness, including unnecessary disability, unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness, inappropriate incarceration, and suicide is more than \$100,000,000,000 each year in the United States;

Whereas alcohol and other drug abuse cost Americans more than \$500,000,000,000 a year through the combined medical, economic, criminal, and social impact on communities;

Whereas the Surgeon General reports that mental health and substance use disorders combined account for more than $\frac{1}{5}$ of all lost days of productive life, exceeding the burden of cardiovascular disease and cancer;

Whereas the indirect costs to Ohio of untreated mental illness total more than \$3,500,000,000 a year;

Whereas between 70 and 90 percent of individuals with mental disorders have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life through treatment;

Whereas drug treatment is proven to cut drug use in half, reduce crime by 80 percent, and reduce arrests by 64 percent;

Whereas for every dollar spent on prevention in Ohio, there is an economic savings of \$7 in reduced crime, child abuse and neglect, homelessness, and lost productivity;

Whereas the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) finds that stigma is a barrier that discourages individuals and their families from getting help;

Whereas stigma can result in inadequate insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorder services;

Whereas stigma may lead to fear and mistrust toward people living with mental illness or substance use disorders and their families;

Whereas stigma may cause families and friends to turn their backs on people with mental illness or substance use disorders;

Whereas SAMHSA finds that many people would rather tell employers that they committed a petty crime and served time in jail than admit to spending time in a psychiatric hospital;

Whereas the Surgeon General finds that stigma must no longer be tolerated if we are to reduce the burden of mental illness, improve access to care, and achieve urgently needed knowledge about the brain, mind, and behavior;

Whereas the American Medical Association, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Addiction concur—addiction is a chemical change in the brain; and

Whereas treatment can work, people can recover, and Americans are well worth the investment: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*
 2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
 3 That Congress—

4 (1) recognizes that stigma fosters discrimina-
 5 tion against individuals with mental health and sub-
 6 stance use disorders and discourages individuals
 7 with mental health and substance use disorders from
 8 seeking treatment;

9 (2) encourages efforts to increase awareness of
 10 the existence and impact of stigma on individuals
 11 with mental health and substance use disorders;

12 (3) recognizes the efforts of the Ohio Depart-
 13 ment of Mental Health and the Ohio Department of
 14 Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services to decrease
 15 stigma through the “Think Outside the Stigma”
 16 campaign; and

17 (4) encourages each and every American to
 18 work toward overcoming the stigma associated with
 19 mental illness and substance use disorders.

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