

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 150

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 74

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 150—Relative to African American Mental Health Awareness Week.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 9, 2010.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 150, Carter. African American Mental Health Awareness Week.

This measure would recognize each 2nd week of February hereafter as African American Mental Health Awareness Week.

WHEREAS, According to the National Alliance on Mental Health, some mental illnesses are more prevalent in the African American community as compared to other cultures in the United States; and

WHEREAS, African Americans suffer as a result of suicide, depression, misdiagnosis, over use of involuntary hospitalization, incarceration, and self-medication via substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Minority Health reports that African Americans are 30 percent more likely to report having serious psychological distress than Whites, yet Whites are more likely to receive treatment for a major depressive episode than African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is the third leading cause of death for all teens in the United States, and the third leading cause of death for African American youth 15 to 19 years of age, inclusive. The suicide rate among African Americans within the last 30 years has increased dramatically. Between 1980 and 1995 the suicide rates for African American youth 10 to 14 years of age, inclusive, has increased by 233 percent, compared to 120 percent for comparable Whites; and

WHEREAS, In the United States African Americans account for only 2 percent of psychiatrists, 2 percent of psychologists, and 4 percent of social workers; and

WHEREAS, Children in the foster care and child welfare system are more likely to develop mental illness, and African American children comprise 45 percent of the foster care system; and

WHEREAS, Prison inmates are at high risk for developing mental illness and less likely to be diagnosed with a mental illness, and half of all prisoners in the United States are African American; and

WHEREAS, The African American Mental Health Coalition is committed to empowering African American communities by promoting the benefits of mental health services, through education, advocacy, policy development, raising awareness, and decreasing the stigma surrounding mental health; and

WHEREAS, The African American Mental Health Coalition has introduced creative and innovative community-based programs and partnered with a variety of local community organizations to help prevent improper interventions, misdiagnosis, involuntary incarceration, and decrease the stigma related to mental health issues in the African American community; and

WHEREAS, The African American Mental Health Coalition is recognized as an important partner in the success of African American Health Awareness Week, through its continued efforts to provide services, information, and advocacy to individuals throughout the African American community, and to make positive changes by increasing awareness and eliminating barriers to care; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes each second week of February hereafter as African American Mental Health Awareness Week; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.