

**Introduced by Senator Beall**

April 14, 2016

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 131—Relative to National Mental Health Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 131, as introduced, Beall. National Mental Health Awareness Month.

This measure would recognize May 2016 as National Mental Health Awareness Month in California to enhance public awareness of mental illness.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Mental illness is one of the leading causes of  
2 disabilities in the United States, affecting one out of every four  
3 families and victimizing both the person with the illness and those  
4 persons who care for and love the person afflicted; and

5 WHEREAS, Serious mental illness costs Americans  
6 approximately \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year; and

7 WHEREAS, The National Institute of Mental Health has  
8 reported that many people suffer from more than one mental  
9 disorder at a given time and that 45 percent of those with any  
10 mental disorder meet criteria for two or more disorders, including  
11 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDs, and cancer, and the  
12 severity of the mental disorder strongly relates to comorbidity;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Fifty-seven million Americans have a mental  
15 disorder in any given year, but fewer than 40 percent of adults  
16 living with a mental illness, and slightly more than one-half of

1 youth 8 to 15 years of age, with a mental illness received mental  
2 health services in the last year; and

3 WHEREAS, Although mental illness impacts all people, many  
4 of those in lower-income communities receive less care, poorer  
5 quality of care, and often lack access to culturally competent care,  
6 thereby resulting in mental health disparities; and

7 WHEREAS, Some see negative perceptions about mental health  
8 care as a significant factor contributing to limited or nonexistent  
9 access to care, and some common concerns are stigma, culture,  
10 masculinity, exposure to violence, and lack of information and  
11 awareness, among many others; and

12 WHEREAS, According to the California Reducing Disparities  
13 Project report, being misdiagnosed and given severe mental health  
14 diagnoses can be stigmatizing and can affect the person's  
15 self-esteem, which, in turn, can discourage the person from seeking  
16 help; and

17 WHEREAS, The three major brain diseases, schizophrenia,  
18 bipolar disorder, and depression, adversely affect the economy,  
19 contribute to the rise of incarceration rates, and erode the quality  
20 of life for patients and their loved ones; and

21 WHEREAS, Nearly two-thirds of all people with a diagnosable  
22 mental illness do not receive mental health treatment due to stigma,  
23 lack of community-based resources, inadequate diagnosis, or no  
24 diagnosis; and

25 WHEREAS, An estimated 70 percent of all youth in the juvenile  
26 justice system have at least one mental health condition, and at  
27 least 20 percent live with severe mental illness that is usually  
28 undiagnosed, misdiagnosed, untreated, or ineffectively treated,  
29 thus leaving those detained in the juvenile justice system in a  
30 vulnerable condition; and

31 WHEREAS, There is a need to improve public awareness of  
32 mental illness and to strengthen local and national awareness of  
33 brain diseases, so that all those with mental illness may receive  
34 adequate and appropriate treatment that will result in their  
35 becoming fully functioning members of society; and

36 WHEREAS, Access to mental health treatment and services is  
37 of paramount importance; and

38 WHEREAS, There is a need to encourage primary care  
39 physicians to offer screenings, to partner with mental health care

1 providers, to seek appropriate referrals to specialists, and to  
2 encourage timely and accurate diagnoses of mental disorders; and  
3 WHEREAS, The Legislature wishes to enhance public  
4 awareness of mental illness, now, therefore, be it

5 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*  
6 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature of the State of California  
7 hereby recognizes May 2016 as National Mental Health Awareness  
8 Month in California to enhance public awareness of mental illness;  
9 and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
11 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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