

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 15
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION
BY THE HOUSE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 3/13/24

Referred: Health and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Designating May 2024 as Mental Health Awareness Month; and designating May 5 - 11,**
2 **2024, as Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **WHEREAS** one in five adults in the United States experiences a mental illness each
5 year, and it is estimated that over 108,000 adults in the state have a mental health condition
6 such as major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and a growing number of other
7 debilitating behavioral health conditions; and

8 **WHEREAS** one in six youths aged 6 - 17 in the United States experiences a mental
9 health disorder each year; and

10 **WHEREAS**, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the peak
11 age of onset of a mental health disorder is adolescence and early adulthood, with half of all
12 mental health conditions beginning by age 14, and 75 percent by age 24; and

13 **WHEREAS** it is estimated that over 8,000 youths in the state aged 12 - 17 experience
14 depression, 62.9 percent of whom did not receive care in the last year; and

15 **WHEREAS** high school students with significant symptoms of depression are more
16 than twice as likely to drop out as students without symptoms of depression; and

1 **WHEREAS** more than half of the individuals in the United States with mental health
2 conditions did not receive treatment last year; and

3 **WHEREAS**, with residents of the state struggling to receive needed mental health
4 care, 29,000 adults in the state did not receive the care last year, with cost being the reason for
5 which over 42 percent of those individuals did not receive the care; and

6 **WHEREAS** 377,470 residents of the state live in communities that do not have
7 enough mental health professionals; and

8 **WHEREAS** anyone is susceptible to experiencing mental health difficulties, just as
9 anyone is susceptible to physical health issues and emergencies; and

10 **WHEREAS** studies suggest that between 10 and 30 percent of people who take
11 antipsychotic medications to treat a mental health disorder will develop a movement disorder
12 called tardive dyskinesia; and

13 **WHEREAS**, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in four
14 patients receiving long-term treatment with an antipsychotic medication will experience
15 tardive dyskinesia; and

16 **WHEREAS** tardive dyskinesia affects approximately 600,000 people in the United
17 States, and nearly 70 percent of Americans living with tardive dyskinesia have not yet been
18 diagnosed; and

19 **WHEREAS**, although tardive dyskinesia may look or feel different from day to day, it
20 is a chronic condition and symptoms may be persistent; and

21 **WHEREAS** one in eight emergency department visits in the United States is related
22 to mental illness or substance use disorder; and

23 **WHEREAS** suicide is a public health problem and leading cause of death in the
24 United States; and

25 **WHEREAS** the state ranks third in the nation in suicides per capita, suicide is the
26 second leading cause of death for individuals aged 10 - 34 in the state, and, on average, one
27 person dies by suicide every 48 hours in the state; and

28 **WHEREAS** it is more important than ever to build a stronger mental health system
29 that provides the care, support, and services needed to help people build better lives; and

30 **WHEREAS** the state of an individual's mental health affects the individual's ability to
31 navigate the environment and societal relationships, adapt to changing situations, and develop

1 healthy coping strategies; and

2 **WHEREAS** addressing complicated mental health needs with coordinated,
3 comprehensive mental health services provides a lifeline for families and individuals
4 struggling with the complex process of locating appropriate treatment; and

5 **WHEREAS** residents of the state must work together to overcome and eliminate the
6 discrimination and stigma that may deter individuals from seeking consistent support and
7 adequate mental health treatment;

8 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages all residents of the
9 state to recognize those affected by mental health issues and the important role that support,
10 acceptance, and mental health services play in enriching the lives of the residents of the state;
11 and be it

12 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature designates May 5 - 11,
13 2024, as Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature designates May 2024 as
15 Mental Health Awareness Month.