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HCR 15 Sponsor Statement

“Designating May 2024 as Mental Health Awareness Month; and designating May 5-11, 2024, as Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week.”

In Alaska, as across the nation, mental illness and its negative impacts stretch far and wide, touching families in every community and across all walks of life. HCR 15 shines a light on the importance of mental health awareness and the challenges of Tardive Dyskinesia.

It is estimated that over 108,000 adults in the state have mental health conditions such as major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and other debilitating behavioral health conditions. The onset of mental health disorders peaks during adolescence and early adulthood, marking a critical period for intervention and support. Yet many Alaskans do not receive the treatment they need due to a variety of barriers, including cost and access to professionals.

Complicating the landscape is the prevalence of Tardive Dyskinesia (TD), a movement disorder induced by long-term use of antipsychotic medications. TD affects 10 to 30 percent of individuals taking these medications and can significantly impact their quality of life.

HCR 15 will designate May 2024 as Mental Health Awareness Month and May 5-11 as Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week. By doing this, we support those battling mental health conditions, advocate for comprehensive care, and challenge the stigma that discourages seeking help.

Let us make mental health a priority in Alaska, ensuring that our policies, resources, and communities are aligned in support of those who face these challenges every day.

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