

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS GRAY-JACKSON, Cronk, Dunbar, Kawasaki, Hughes, Kaufman

Introduced: 4/15/25

Referred: Health and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Designating May 2025 as Mental Health Awareness Month; and designating May 4 - 10,**
2 **2025, 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 United States Centers for Disease Control and
11 Prevention, the peak age of onset of a mental health disorder is adolescence and early
12 adulthood, with half of all mental health conditions beginning by age 14, and 75 percent by
13 age 24; and

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

16 **WHEREAS** high school students with significant symptoms of depression are more

1 than twice as likely to drop out as students without symptoms of depression; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 **WHEREAS** the state ranks second in the nation in suicides per capita, suicide is the
24 second leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of 10 and 34 in the state, and,
25 on average, one person dies by suicide every 48 hours in the state; and

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

28 **WHEREAS** the state of an individual's mental health affects the individual's ability to
29 navigate the environment and societal relationships, adapt to changing situations, and develop
30 healthy coping strategies; and

31 **WHEREAS** addressing complicated mental health needs with coordinated,

1 comprehensive mental health services provides a lifeline for families and individuals
2 struggling with the complex process of locating appropriate treatment; and

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

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

10 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature designates May 4 - 10,
11 2025, as Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week; and be it

12 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature designates May 2025 as
13 Mental Health Awareness Month.