



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 21-5290, Version: 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

DECLARING MENTAL HEALTH A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHEREAS, Public Health Awareness raises awareness of the relationship between the health of individuals and the health of their communities; and

WHEREAS, mental health is a person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, in light of the pandemic we have seen a rise in the use of and need for mental health services across the United States; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in 5 adults experience mental illness and 1 in 20 have a serious mental illness; and

WHEREAS, according to NAMI, people with serious mental illness have an increased risk for chronic disease, like diabetes or cancer, 18% of U.S. adults with mental illness also have a substance use disorder, 21% of people experiencing homelessness also have a serious mental illness, 1 in 8 of all visits to U.S. emergency departments are related to mental and substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death of people ages 10-34 in the US and 46% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosed mental health condition.; and

WHEREAS, according to data collected by the Chicago Department of Public Health, in 2018, roughly 54,000 people received behavioral health treatment while in 2020 there were over 68,000 people who received behavioral health treatment, accounting for an 26% increase in comparison to individuals who have received treatment in 2018; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 Cook County Health and the Cook County Behavioral Health Consortium provided care for an average of over 8,700 patients in need of mental health services, while in the first two quarters of 2021 that number is 8,695 which is on pace for a more than 100% increase from the previous years' numbers; and

WHEREAS, according to the Cook County Medical Examiner's office there has been an average of 475 deaths per year by suicide since 2017. With roughly 329 deaths recorded for 2021, Cook County is currently on pace to reach the previous years' average; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Cook County will: led by the Cook County Board President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners (County Board), in collaboration with Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health; Declare mental health a public health crisis in Cook County and affecting our entire society; Assess internal plans, policies and procedures to ensure solutions to address the lack of awareness and the need for increased mental health services in Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Cook County, Cook County Health and Cook County Department of Public Health will work with healthcare, mental health and community based organizations to: (1) create strategies to increase awareness of mental health services (2) increase funding for mental health and behavioral health disorders through the Justice Advisory Council; (3) increase access to inpatient and outpatient mental health services (4) work with

marginalized populations to provide education on mental health, issues and solutions (5) Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and (6) support local, State, and Federal programs that advance mental health initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, We established a line item that provides resources addressing mental health services and the lack of awareness by creating targeted campaigns of education to reduce the stigma on mental health and create a Chief of Behavioral Health for Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County will encourage other local, State, and national entities to declare mental health a public health crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board hereby supports the efforts to address public health disparities due to lack of mental health resources in Cook County.