

Approved as to Form and Legality



City Attorney's Office

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER LOREN TAYLOR

RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MAY 2021 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH IN THE CITY OF OAKLAND AND CALLING ON ALAMEDA COUNTY TO FULLY INVEST IN IMPLEMENTING ALL OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE APRIL 22, 2021 REPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION ENTITLED, "INVESTIGATION OF ALAMEDA COUNTY, JOHN GEORGE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, AND SANTA RITA JAIL"

WHEREAS, since 1949, May has officially been recognized as Mental Health Month; and the mental health and well-being of residents in Oakland is a vital issue that affects not only quality of life, but also the health of communities, families, and economic stability; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, research shows that mental illnesses are common in the United States, affecting tens of millions of people each year. Estimates suggest that only half of people with mental illnesses receive treatment. Mental illnesses include many different conditions that vary in degree of severity, ranging from mild to moderate to severe; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, there were an estimated 51.5 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States with any mental illness (AMI). AMI is defined as a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder. This number represented 20.6% of all U.S. adults; and

WHEREAS, mental illness is among the most common health problems faced by Californians, with nearly 1 in 6 California adults experiencing a mental illness of some kind, 1 in 24 adults having a serious mental illness that makes it difficult to carry out major life activities, and 1 in 13 children having an emotional disturbance that limits their participation in daily activities; and

WHEREAS, behavioral health disorders, including major depression, schizophrenia, panic disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorders affect many children and youth every year, indiscriminate of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or economic status; and

WHEREAS, 35 percent of young adults, ages 18 to 25, with any mental illness and 56 percent of young adults with a serious mental illness report a perceived unmet need for mental health services, rates that are higher than any other adult age groups; and

WHEREAS, mental illness is the leading cause of disability in the nation, one in five adults experiences a mental health problem in any given year and one in 17 adults lives with mental illness such as major depression, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia; and

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2020, and amended on June 2, 2020, the City Council declared a Local Health Emergency For Oakland's Black And Latinx Residents due to the COVID-19 pandemic which cited reports, data and information provided by governmental, health, community and other organizations documenting the devastating and unequal impacts of COVID-19 on Oakland's Black and Latinx residents including increased incidences and magnitude of mental and behavioral health challenges; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated challenges faced by residents in these communities due to wage/job loss and business closures, and that pre-existing health conditions worsen the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Black community members face barriers to mental health care including socioeconomic factors that can make treatment options less available and the Black community, like other communities of color, are more likely to experience socio-economic disparities such as exclusion from health, educational, social and economic resources, factors that are known to contribute to worse mental health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, stigma and negative attitudes and beliefs towards people who live with mental health conditions is pervasive within the U.S. and can be particularly strong within the Black community and other communities of color as evidenced by one study that showed that 63% of Black people believe that a mental health condition is a sign of personal weakness. As a result, people may experience shame about having a mental illness and worry that they may be discriminated against due to their condition if they were to acknowledge it. For many in the Black community, it can be incredibly challenging to discuss the topic of mental health due to this concern about how they may be perceived by others. This fear could prevent people from seeking mental health care when they really need it; and

WHEREAS, most suicides are related to psychiatric disease, with depression, substance use disorders and psychosis being the most relevant risk factors and the national suicide rate has increased over 30 percent since 1999, and annually 1.4 million Americans attempt suicide and 129 Americans die by suicide each day; and

WHEREAS, suicide significantly impacts many of our diverse communities in Oakland including:

- Veterans who have a suicide rate 1.5 times higher than nonveteran adults and
- Young adults and children between the ages of 10 and 34 for whom suicide is the second leading cause of death
- Latina adolescent girls for whom 1 in 4 report contemplate suicide, a rate higher than any other demographic; and
- Native Americans who currently rank as the top ethnicity for suicide rates among young people nationwide; and
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth who are more than four times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers, and up to 40 percent of all transgender individuals have made a suicide attempt, many before the age of 25; and

WHEREAS, individuals with mental health conditions and other behavioral health disorders can and do recover with clinical treatment and social supports, including medications, psychotherapies, psychosocial rehabilitation, counseling services, and peer support; and

WHEREAS, public education and civic activities can encourage mental health and help improve the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness; and it is important to maintain mental health and learn the symptoms of mental health illness in order to get help when needed; and

WHEREAS, every person and community can make a difference in helping end the silence and stigma that for too long has surrounded mental illness and discouraged people from getting help; and

WHEREAS, the average delay between symptom onset and treatment is 11 years. Early identification and treatment can make a difference in successful management of mental illness and recovery; and

WHEREAS, long delays—sometimes decades—often occur between the time symptoms first appear and when individuals get help and early identification and treatment can make a difference in successful management of mental illness and recovery; and

WHEREAS, ineffectively addressed mental health conditions negatively impact the City of Oakland's efforts to improve life outcomes of Oakland's youth. Approximately 50 percent of students with a mental health condition 14 years or older drop out of school, the highest dropout rate for any disability group; and

WHEREAS, ineffectively addressed mental health conditions negatively impact the success of Oakland's efforts to improve and reimagine public safety for all Oaklanders and research suggests that patients with mental illness may be more prone to violence if they do not receive adequate treatment, are actively experiencing delusions, or have long-standing paranoia. And the most important and independent risk factor for criminality and violence among individuals with mental illness is a long-term substance use disorder; and

WHEREAS, roughly 20 to 50 percent of all prison and jail inmates are diagnosed with a mental illness and those with mental illness are 11 times more likely to be the victims of crime and abuse and the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental health condition; and

WHEREAS, ineffectively addressed mental and behavioral health conditions negatively impact Oakland's efforts to reverse the trend of rising homelessness and move toward functional zero homelessness across the city (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK537064/>) given that 14 % of Oakland's homeless described mental health issues as the primary cause of their homelessness and 10 % described substance abuse issues as the primary cause of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, ineffectively addressed mental health conditions negatively impact Oakland's efforts to create more vibrant and equitable economic outcomes for all Oaklanders given that untreated mental illness is a leading cause of absenteeism and presenteeism resulting in lost earnings and productivity in the workplace which at a national level costs the United States economy over \$193 billion per year in lost earnings; and

WHEREAS, the US Department of Justice's (US DOJ) Division of Civil Rights published a report on April 22, 2021 on its investigation into the conditions and practices at Santa Rita Jail and John George Psychiatric Hospital, and into whether Alameda County's reliance on John George Psychiatric Hospital and sub-acute psychiatric facilities to provide mental health services to adults with mental health disabilities violates those individuals' right to receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs; and

WHEREAS, the US DOJ's Division of Civil Rights expressed reasonable cause to believe that: (1) Alameda County violates the ADA by failing to provide services to qualified individuals with mental health disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs by unnecessarily institutionalizing them at John George Psychiatric Hospital and sub-acute facilities; (2) Santa Rita Jail fails to provide constitutionally adequate mental health care to prisoners with serious mental health needs, including those at risk of suicide; (3) Santa Rita Jail's use of prolonged restrictive housing under current conditions violates the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendment rights of prisoners with serious mental illness; and (4) Santa Rita Jail violates the ADA by denying prisoners with mental health disabilities access to services, programs, and activities because of their disabilities; and

WHEREAS, on April 28, 2021 the Oakland Unified School District Board enacted Resolution number 2021-0046 Prioritizing Social Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Credit Recovery Support Services In Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic with particular emphasis on Seeking partnership with the City of Oakland and County of Alameda on cross-sector collaborations to support student mental wellness and to ensure, to the extent possible, that local public agencies are aligning and maximizing resources invested in social emotional and mental health supports; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the City of Oakland, hereby declares May 2021 as Mental Health Month to increase public understanding of the importance of mental illness and to promote early identification and treatment of mental illnesses; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City of Oakland thereby requests that the school district, elected officials, businesses, government agency's, health-care providers, organizations and residents, recommit our community to increasing awareness and understanding of mental health, the steps our children, youth and adults can take to protect their mental health, and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people, especially children and youth with mental health conditions; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Oakland City Council calls on Alameda County to fully invest in implementing all of the recommendations contained in the April 22, 2021 report from the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division entitled, "Investigation of Alameda County, John George Psychiatric Hospital, and Santa Rita Jail."

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, KALB, KAPLAN, REID, TAYLOR, THAO AND
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: _____

ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California