

SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION FOR ITEM # 21-5290
HEALTH AND HOSPITALS COMMITTEE MEETING

OCTOBER 5, 2021 AT 12:00 NOON

REPLACES ALL OTHER VERSIONS

SPONSORED BY :

HON. DENNIS DEER, ALMA ANAYA, AND BRANDON JOHNSON
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ITEM # 21-5290- 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, behavioral health is a person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being including substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, in light of the pandemic we have seen a rise in the use of and need for behavioral 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, Cook County Health's Department of Psychiatry provided care for more than 8,700 patients in need of behavioral health services in 2019 and has cared for 8,695 patients during the first two quarters of 2021 ; 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

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Cook County, led by the President and the Board of Commissioners, declare mental health a public health crisis in Cook County and affecting our entire society; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Cook County and Cook County Health through its Department of Behavioral Health and Department of Public Health continue to work with community healthcare providers and mental health and community-based organizations including the Cook County Behavioral Health Consortium to:

1. assess internal plans, policies and procedures to ensure solutions to address the lack of awareness and the need for increased behavioral health services in Cook County; and
2. create strategies to increase awareness of behavioral health services; and
3. increase funding for behavioral health services including mental health and substance use treatment through the Justice Advisory Council; and
4. increase access to inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services; and
5. work with marginalized populations to provide education on behavioral health, issues and solutions; and
6. assess and advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and
7. support local, State, and Federal programs that advance behavioral health initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in collaboration with CCH and their Executive Director of Behavioral Health Services, we dedicate funding to augment existing resources and advocate for additional external funding for educational campaigns to increase public awareness of behavioral health services in an effort to reduce stigma; 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 behavioral health resources throughout Cook County.