



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 16-3063, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING MAY 22, 2016 AS “STOP THE STIGMA SUNDAY”

WHEREAS, in 2013 President Barack Obama proclaimed May to be National Mental Health Awareness Month; and,

WHEREAS, in 2011 Illinois made greater reductions in state funding for mental health than any other state in the United States of America; and,

WHEREAS, the current round of state budget negotiations in Springfield indicates that Illinois is on track to continue its status as one of the poorest funders of mental health services in the nation; and,

WHEREAS, according to Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart, the reduction in funding for mental health services across multiple levels of government, has resulted in the Cook County Jail being the largest mental health facility in the state and possibly the nation; and,

WHEREAS, according to a joint report authored by the Mental Health Movement of Chicago and AFSCME Council 31, Chicago’s closure of half of its mental health clinics in April of 2012 resulted in a failure by the City of Chicago to account for hundreds and perhaps thousands of people who had depended on these clinics for mental health treatment services; and,

WHEREAS, that same report, entitled “Abandoning the Most Vulnerable,” cites a complete lack of a comprehensive effort to determine how many people lost access to mental health treatment services after the Chicago clinic closures and similar lack of effort to make contact with the individuals who lost access to treatment and connect them with new service providers; and,

WHEREAS, Cook County, which is charged with providing services to the most vulnerable members of our local population, deals every day with the consequences of an inadequate safety net that has stranded too many of our residents without access to care that they urgently need; and,

WHEREAS, we count among those consequences an overcrowded Jail, court system and Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, all of which constitute a significant drain on Cook County’s budget and resources; and,

WHEREAS, in addition to funding barriers, the stigma associated with having a mental illness has prevented many people from receiving the treatment they require; and,

WHEREAS, churches across Cook County will be hosting a program called “Stop the Stigma Sunday” on Sunday May 22, 2016; and,

WHEREAS, in recognition of “Stop the Stigma Sunday,” clergy and church leaders will feature in their sermons and Sunday programs a segment on mental health destigmatization; and,

WHEREAS, as part of “Stop the Stigma Sunday,” materials will be provided to clergy and church leadership to assist them in crafting their presentations to their congregations; and,

WHEREAS, as it is good, fitting and appropriate that Cook County government should lend its support to such a critical initiative that addresses such an important public policy challenge;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County President and the Board of Commissioners recognize May 22, 2016 as “Stop the Stigma Sunday”; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County President and the Board of Commissioners express their support and appreciation to the men and women of faith, as well as those community activists and leaders who will take the time on May 22, 2016 to raise awareness and combat the stigma that all too often surrounds mental health issues in Cook County and beyond.