

## Legislation Text

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Recognizing May 2016 as Mental Health Awareness Month in the City of Philadelphia and honoring the work of Parity Track and its co-founders in raising awareness of federal and state behavioral health parity requirements.

WHEREAS, For decades, across the nation, Commonwealth, and City, May has been recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Along with substance abuse disorders, mental health is a component of behavioral health; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, Congress passed the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (“Parity Act”), which ensures that behavioral health care and medical care are covered equally under qualifying health insurance plans, though regulations governing enforcement were only set in 2013; and

WHEREAS, The stigma and discrimination surrounding behavioral health conditions, including from insurers, are still barriers to seeking treatment worldwide; and

WHEREAS, A partnership of entities in the behavioral health space created Parity Track, which is a collaborative forum working to aggregate and elevate parity implementation across the country, intended to be the central site for mental health and substance use disorder parity information and exclusive insight into parity issues, and seeking to help consumers both to understand their rights under the Parity Act and state parity laws and to feel empowered to exercise those rights; and

WHEREAS, Parity Track is intended to help consumers and advocacy organizations working on parity law compliance in their state, which are tasked with enforcing the Parity Act; and

WHEREAS, Last year, the website ParityTrack.org was launched to draw attention to legal requirements, including those in Pennsylvania, and helping consumers identify parity law violations, such as when insurers set higher deductibles or co-pays for behavioral health treatment, or patients experience long wait times to see a behavioral health provider - one of the most common parity law violations; and

WHEREAS, Parity Track and its website are the results of a partnership between the mental health advocacy non-profit Kennedy Forum and the Quaker-based, grant-making philanthropy Thomas Scattergood Behavioral Health Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Parity Track and ParityTrack.org are excellent tools to achieve the noble task of attaining equity between behavioral health treatment and medical care, this Mental Health Awareness Month and throughout the year.; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby proclaim May 2016 as Mental Health Awareness Month in the City of Philadelphia and honor the work of Parity Track and its co-founders in raising awareness of federal and state behavioral health parity requirements.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to representatives of Parity Track.par