

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings regarding the provision of Behavioral Health services for people of color and the state of mental health and mental health awareness in the Black community and other communities of color.

WHEREAS, With House Resolution 141 of 2017, the Pennsylvania General Assembly designated May as “Mental Health Awareness in the Black Community Month” in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, HR 141 was inspired by the Black Brain Campaign, an initiative established by therapists Jaynay Johnson and Farida E. Boyer for the purpose of raising awareness of issues surrounding both mental health and mental health care in the African American community, and ultimately strengthening families therein; and

WHEREAS, The campaign points out the well-researched mental health disparities between African Americans and persons of other races, as well as the existence of a significant mental health care gap, caused in large part by persistent racial inequality and historical race-based exclusion; and

WHEREAS, The disparities are twofold, with African Americans both disproportionately affected by serious psychological distress and mental health disorders, and also less likely to seek and access mental health services; and

WHEREAS, The American Psychological Association has found that young adult African Americans, even when controlling for level of educational attainment, are less likely than other young adults to seek mental health treatment, and in addition, when they do receive care, it is more likely to be emergency, rather than outpatient service; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that any attempt at health care policy reform include strategies to eliminate mental health disparities based on race, ethnicity, education, income or geography; and

WHEREAS, Such reforms require the sincere efforts of patients, families, practitioners, school- and community-based counselors, health systems, social service providers, health policy experts, advocates, and every level of government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby authorize the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings regarding the provision of Behavioral Health services for people of color and the state of mental health and mental health awareness in the Black community and other communities of color.