Legislation Text

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Recognizing September as National Recovery Month in Philadelphia and celebrating the 20th Annual PRO-ACT Recovery Walks! to promote recovery and work to end the stigma surrounding drug and alcohol addiction.

WHEREAS, September 2021 marks the 32nd Annual National Recovery Month. This month celebrates the gains people with mental and/or substance use disorders have made towards living healthy and rewarding lives by utilizing substance use treatment and mental health services. The 2020 National Recovery Month theme is "Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connections" which reminds people in recovery and those who support them, that we all have victories to celebrate and this year, as we face the challenges of a global pandemic, those connections are more important than ever; and

WHEREAS, According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 47.6 million American adults, or 19.1% of American adults, experience mental illness. Meanwhile, 20.3 million Americans aged 12 or older, or about 7% of the population, have a substance use disorder. Of these, 9.2 million American adults have co-occurring mental and substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, drug overdoses killed 1,214 Philadelphians, marking the City's second-highest drug death toll on record. According to the Department of Health, 86% of overdose fatalities involved opioids, a class of drugs that include pharmaceutical opioids, heroin, and fentanyl, a strong synthetic opioid that is the main driver of fatal overdoses. While fentanyl was involved in less than 10% of drug overdose deaths in Philadelphia in 2010, it was involved in 81% of all drug overdose deaths in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Millions of Americans have transformed their lives through recovery. Each September, tens of thousands of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and facilities celebrate the accomplishments made by those who have sought treatment. Locally, the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services provides a wide range of recovery support services and resources, with oversight of 55 provider agencies operating 112 locations; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, the Recovery Walks! has a storied history, and 2021 will be an exciting chapter in that story. Starting with 100 people it has grown to over 30,000 participating in past years. This year we are broadening the virtual experience throughout the month as we join together to celebrate and affirm that recovery is possible for all and to highlight our city's collaborative and hopeful response to the opioid epidemic. Recovery Walks! is the largest National Recovery Month event in the nation, as 30,000 recovery supporters walked in previous years. The purpose of Recovery Walks! is to provide hope to others by showing that recovery from addiction is real, to reduce the stigma of the disease, to educate the media and public, to celebrate National Recovery Month, to honor people and organizations that provide services for the recovery community, and to honor those who have not survived this deadly disease; and

WHEREAS, PRO-ACT, a program of The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania, is a grassroots organization for people affected by substance use disorders and their family members. By offering community education, peer education and support, advocacy, and recovery support services, PRO-ACT teaches, heals, and helps thousands

of people throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, Treating tobacco use disorder concurrently with mental illness and other addictive disorders is safe, improves treatment outcomes, contributes to longer term sobriety, reduces social stigma, and enhances the health and quality of life of people in recovery. Philadelphia was an early adopter to a recovery-oriented system of care model. Individuals receiving care in the DBHIDS network of services deserve environments that promote hope to improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. Change is always possible and the extent to which people's lives can change is often beyond what we can imagine. For the health and recovery of our community and our families, Recovery Walks! is an alcohol, tobacco, vape and drug free event, and provides key information on how to quit smoking, and access to free resources to support those seeking to include being tobacco free in their recovery; and

WHEREAS, An increasing number of lives are lost to mental and/or substance use disorders, so the positive and hopeful message of the opportunity of recovery must be shared more widely and effectively than ever. Ending the stigma surrounding addiction is an important step towards helping more individuals seek treatment to live fulfilling lives. Events like PRO-ACT Recovery Walks! are essential to changing public perception regarding mental and substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, This year's PRO-ACT Recovery Walk will take place virtually on Saturday, September 18th from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The event will be streamed live via Facebook Live; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes September as National Recovery Month in Philadelphia and celebrates the 20th Annual PRO-ACT Recovery Walks! to promote recovery and work to end the stigma surrounding drug and alcohol addiction.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to PRO-ACT, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.

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