

Legislation Text

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Recognizing May 2022 as Mental Health Awareness Month in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, counties, including Philadelphia, provide essential community-based mental health services such as crisis intervention, community residential programs, family-based support and outpatient care, which are critical to the well-being of our constituents and our communities; and

WHEREAS, Counties across the Commonwealth, as the providers of such services, are seeing demand that far exceeds state funding levels, creating the very real possibility that the mental health needs of the most vulnerable among us will not be adequately met; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, the Commonwealth cut \$84 million in funding to counties for people with intellectual disabilities, mental health challenges, and other needs, forcing programs to shrink or close and putting the human services system into a vulnerable state; and

WHEREAS, The need for adequately funded mental health services has been a central focus of the collective advocacy of County Commissioners across Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, For years, state funding for mental health services has lagged behind caseloads, negatively affecting services while straining local budgets; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Rural Progress has noted a steep rise in suicides across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, especially in more sparsely populated areas; and

WHEREAS, Governor Wolf's initial budget proposal includes supporting the behavioral health needs of Pennsylvanians by investing \$36.6 million in additional county mental health base funds on top of \$75 million in federal funding for recruitment and retention payments to qualifying home- and community-based service providers, as well as \$18.8 million to provide services to emergency waitlisted individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or autism; and

WHEREAS, Even with admirable investments in community-based mental health services, Philadelphia and other counties will need to collaborate with the Wolf Administration and the Pennsylvania General Assembly and work closely with them on targeted, strategic investments of dollars into county-level mental health services in order to preserve the existing safety net and bolster the availability of such services for those most in need; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize May 2022 as Mental Health Awareness Month in the City of Philadelphia.