



Solano County

675 Texas Street
Fairfield, California 94533
www.solanocounty.com

Legislation Text

File #: 20-346, Version: 1

Adopt a resolution recognizing May 2020 as Mental Health Awareness Month in Solano County; and Adopt a resolution recognizing May 6, 2020 as World Maternal Mental Health Day in Solano County

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒
Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Health and Social Services (H&SS) recommends that the Board adopt a resolution recognizing May 2020 as Mental Health Awareness Month in Solano County; and adopt a resolution recognizing May 6, 2020 as World Maternal Mental Health Day in Solano County.

SUMMARY:

Mental Health Awareness Month, also referred to as "Mental Health Month," has been observed in May every year since it began in 1949. Mental Health Awareness month serves as a national effort to reach millions of people through the media, local events and screenings, and spread the word that mental health should be an issue of interest to everyone. Mental Health Awareness Month also focuses on different populations such as women who experience perinatal and post-partum mental health needs, referred to as Maternal Mental Health, and designates a specific date to focus on this population.

The first World Maternal Mental Health Day was launched in 2016 and is commemorated annually on the first Wednesday of May which is May 6th this year. World Maternal Mental Health Day was launched to raise awareness of maternal mental health issues so that more women seek help and receive treatment. Organizations from around the world will unite in efforts to raise awareness about maternal mental health through a collective social media drive and through events. Both the Mental Health Awareness Month and the World Maternal Mental Health Day resolutions provide an opportunity to raise public awareness of the vital role mental wellness plays in an individual's overall health and well-being.

The month of May is typically filled with community activities sponsored by the County, contract agencies, and individuals with lived experience to understand mental health and reduce the stigma associated with mental health and treatment. Because of the COVID-19 health crisis, no in-person events are scheduled. Some events may be adapted and offered in online formats, but most events will be rescheduled for September during National Recovery Month.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The costs associated with preparation of this board item and related activities are included in the Department's FY2019/20 Adopted Budget. There is no additional financial impact to the County General Fund.

DISCUSSION:

One in five adults experience mental health conditions each year, ranging from mild episodes to serious and persisting illness. According to National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), three out of four of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 24, and the average delay between the onset of symptoms and intervention is

eleven years. The Solano County Behavioral Health Division provides a range of specialty mental health services to over 5,000 individuals, both children and adults, experiencing serious mental health conditions. Behavioral Health provides services and supports that are person-centered, safe, effective, efficient, timely and equitable, that are supported by friends and the community, and that promote wellness and recovery. Prevention and early intervention (PEI) programs and services include strategies to reduce stigma and discrimination of individuals with mental health conditions and suicide prevention. In addition, over 800 individuals are served by the Medical Services Division in the County's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC).

Solano County Behavioral Health and community-based mental health providers had planned to sponsor or organize a variety of activities and events throughout the month of May to celebrate mental wellness; however, due to COVID-19 and the need for social distancing these activities and events have been postponed. Efforts will be made to utilize social media platforms to raise awareness about mental health, available services and appropriate resources.

World Maternal Mental Health Day draws attention to essential health concerns for mothers and families. Life changes around pregnancy make women more vulnerable to mental illness. As many as one in five new mothers experience some type of perinatal mood and anxiety disorder and according to California Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) reports, one in five women in California who recently gave birth experienced symptoms of depression during and after pregnancy, translating to approximately 100,000 women in California annually. This may have long-lasting physical, cognitive and emotional outcomes as women of every culture, age, income level and race can develop perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. The prevalence is estimated to be even higher in certain populations. For example, one in four African American and Latina mothers in the State reports depressive symptoms as do as many as half of all mothers living in poverty. Symptoms can appear any time during pregnancy and within the first twelve months after childbirth.

The Solano Public Health MCAH Bureau screens for symptoms of depression using validated tools and provides appropriate referrals and ancillary support for women in need of care. Through a partnership and braided funding between Solano County Behavioral Health and Public Health, an evidence-based intervention titled the "Mothers and Babies Perinatal Depression Prevention Program" promotes healthy mood management. Providing the intervention during the perinatal period (pregnancy through baby's first year) may also prevent adverse childhood experiences in early childhood that can have lifetime effects. By design, the curriculum is delivered by staff of varied educational and professional backgrounds, in one-on-one and group modalities. Furthermore, a mental health clinician provides crisis support, brief counseling, and linkage for women who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health conditions. For individuals that need more intensive mental health services the MCAH staff link consumers to the Behavioral Health Division.

Increasing awareness will drive social change and support the goal of improving quality of care for people who experience mental illnesses as well as women experiencing all types of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, thereby reducing the stigma of experiencing mental health issues and seeking supports. Solano County Behavioral Health and healthcare professionals, friends, and relatives of new moms are encouraged to listen and ask how people are truly feeling. Mental Health Awareness Month and Maternal Mental Health Day create opportunities for people to speak out about their mental health, ensure they know that seeking help is not a weakness and emphasize that they are not alone.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board may choose not to adopt the resolutions. This is not recommended because the resolutions are an opportunity to raise awareness and promote community discussion regarding the impact of mental illness and the services available to address these issues.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Solano County Mental Health Advisory Board endorses the resolutions and activities. Additionally, H&SS Behavioral Health Division will continue to partner with various community-based mental health providers and community organizations to support Mental Health Awareness Month in May. Similarly, the MCAH Bureau of H&SS Public Health will partner with various organizations to promote World Maternal Mental Health Day.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION