

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 42

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblyman NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman JOANN DOWNEY

District 11 (Monmouth)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Rooney, McKeon, Conaway, Assemblywomen Jimenez, Lopez, Assemblyman Houghtaling, Assemblywomen Mosquera, Lampitt and Assemblyman Freiman

SYNOPSIS

Designates first week of May of each year as “Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** permanently designating first week of May
2 as “Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week” in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, Mental health is an essential part of a person’s overall
5 health and ability to thrive in their community; and
6 **WHEREAS**, Mental illnesses are medical conditions that disrupt a
7 person’s thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and
8 daily functioning; and
9 **WHEREAS**, Just as ailments of other organs of the body, mental
10 illnesses are medical conditions that often result in diminished
11 capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life; and
12 **WHEREAS**, Emotional disturbances can affect a child beyond their
13 immediate emotional state, sometimes creating long-term mental
14 health challenges that can affect physical, social, or cognitive skills;
15 and
16 **WHEREAS**, Some characteristics commonly seen in children who have
17 an emotional disturbance include hyperactivity, aggression, self-
18 injurious behavior, social withdrawal, immaturity, and learning
19 difficulties; and
20 **WHEREAS**, Children are, in many ways, more vulnerable than adults to
21 mental illness, and children with mental illness have a far greater
22 likelihood of being suspended from school, abusing drugs or
23 alcohol, or ending up in the juvenile justice system; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Many children with mental health disorders do not receive
25 treatment for their illnesses, due to poor understanding of mental
26 illness and treatment options, stigma or lack of access to treatment;
27 and
28 **WHEREAS**, Enhanced awareness of mental illness in children can
29 help to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, and help
30 improve access to treatment that can help children lead full and
31 productive lives; and
32 **WHEREAS**, The first week of May is recognized as National
33 Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week to promote positive
34 development of children’s mental health; and
35 **WHEREAS**, The State of New Jersey can support the efforts of
36 national and local groups advocating for children’s mental health
37 by annually honoring “Children’s Mental Health Awareness
38 Week”; now, therefore,
39
40 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
41 *State of New Jersey:*
42
43 1. The first week of May of each year is designated as
44 "Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week" in the State of New
45 Jersey in order to foster public awareness and understanding of
46 mental health and mental illness in children.

AJR42 MCKNIGHT, VAINIERI HUTTLE

2. The Governor is requested to annually issue a proclamation calling upon public officials and the citizens of this State to observe "Children's Mental Health Awareness Week" with appropriate activities and programs.

3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This joint resolution designates the first week of May as “Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week” in New Jersey to raise public awareness of mental health and mental illness in children.

Mental illness can adversely affect children in many ways, including increasing the likelihood of a child of being suspended from school, abusing drugs or alcohol, or ending up in the juvenile justice system. Many children with mental health disorders do not receive treatment for their illnesses, due to poor understanding of mental illness and treatment options, stigma or lack of access to treatment. The resolution intends to promote awareness in hopes of improving the lives of children who have emotional disturbances and other mental health disorders.