[Supporting National Mental Health Awareness Month During COVID-19]

Resolution supporting National Mental Health Awareness Month and efforts of mental health service providers to implement low-barrier, quality services in order to overcome the negative impacts of COVID-19 to a person’s mental health and wellness during the global pandemic.

WHEREAS, On February 25, 2020, Mayor London Breed proclaimed a state of emergency (the “Public Health Emergency”) in response to the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19; on March 3, 2020, the Board of Supervisors concurred in the February 25, 2020, Proclamation and in the actions taken by the Mayor to meet the Public Health Emergency; and

WHEREAS, To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, on March 16, 2020, the Local Health Officer issued Health Order No. C19-07 directing San Franciscans to “shelter in place,” or stay at home, except as necessary to take care of essential needs; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic and orders to “shelter in place” have caused both a psychological and economic depression that has negatively affected the mental health and stability of many people especially those already suffering from mental illness and substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, The month of May has been designated as National Mental Health Month to fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly one in five of U.S. adults (47 million) reported having a mental illness in the past year; and
WHEREAS, Over 11 million had a serious mental illness, which frequently results in functional impairment and limits life activities; and

WHEREAS, In 2017-2018, nearly 17 million adults and an additional 3 million adolescents had a major depressive episode in the past year; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, nearly a third (32.5%) of adults reported feeling worried, nervous, or anxious on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis; and

WHEREAS, A broad body of research links social isolation and loneliness to poor mental health; and recent data shows that significantly higher shares of people who were sheltering in place (47%) reported negative mental health effects resulting from worry or stress related to coronavirus than among those not sheltering in place (37%); and

WHEREAS, Negative mental health effects due to social isolation may be particularly pronounced among older adults and households with adolescents, as these groups are already at risk for depression or suicidal ideation; and

WHEREAS, Existing mental illness among adolescents may be exacerbated by the pandemic, and with school closures, they will not have the same access to key mental health services; and

WHEREAS, With long-term closures of childcare centers and schools, many parents are experiencing ongoing disruption to their daily routines; and

WHEREAS, Findings from an April 2020 Kaiser Family Foundation Tracking Poll show that among parents with children under the age of 18, nearly three out of five (57%) women say that worry or stress related to the coronavirus has negatively impacted their mental health, up from 36% of women in the same tracking poll conducted two weeks prior; and

WHEREAS, The same poll also finds that women with children under the age of 18 are more likely to report negative impacts to their mental health than their male counterparts (57% vs 32%, respectively); and
WHEREAS, Research shows that job loss is associated with increased depression, anxiety, distress, and low self-esteem and may lead to higher rates of substance use disorder and suicide; and

WHEREAS, To address the growing mental health concerns during COVID-19 the Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHASF) has expanded their Peer Run Warm Line (“Warm Line”) to anyone in California needing 24/7 mental health support; and

WHEREAS, The Warm Line is a highly accessible, low-threshold mental health resource that people can use to seek support before they’ve reached the crisis point, in the hope that support now will prevent a crisis later; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the Shelter in Place directives, The Warm Line averaged 3,100 calls and chat sessions per month with trained peers with specialized training in supporting mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, The Warm Line has seen an increase of 53% in call volume, now averaging 5,800 calls and chat sessions per month between March 2020 and April 2020; and

WHEREAS, 19% of San Francisco calls and chats were COVID-19 related in March 2020, which increased to 38% in April; and

WHEREAS, 37% of all California calls and chat were COVID-19 related in March 2020, 39% in April 2020; 84% of calls and chat session chat are from individuals that have used the service before; and

WHEREAS, Post COVID-19 MHASF has not only continued but expanded its 1:1 Peer Coaching/Support and Group Support services through virtual support group platforms like Adults on the Autism Spectrum, Managing Anxiety, People of Color, Community Building Coffee Talk with MHASF, and Collecting Behaviors/Hoarding Disorder; and

WHEREAS, The National Alliance on Mental Illness, San Francisco (NAMI SF) has also increased their support groups to four times a week, to meet the heightened demands
post COVID-19, through online support groups and psychoeducation classes for families and
individuals living with a mental health condition; and

WHEREAS, NAMI SF continues to raise awareness in the community by offering
mental health education and stigma reduction programs online for high school students,
businesses, and community groups; and

WHEREAS, Recent polling data shows that more than half of the people who lost
income or employment reported negative mental health impacts from worry or stress over
coronavirus; and lower income people report higher rates of major negative mental health
impacts compared to higher income people; and

WHEREAS, Many hospitals across the country are overwhelmed with the growing
number of patients presenting with symptoms of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that burnout in hospitals is particularly high for young
registered nurses and nurses in hospitals with lower nurse-to-patient densities; physicians are
also prone to experiencing burnout and can consequently suffer from mental health issues,
including depression and substance use; the risk of suicide is also high among physicians;
now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the Department of Public
Health, and Office of the Mayor reaffirm their commitment in achieving the true goals of
mental health parity by: 1) increasing awareness and understanding of mental health issues;
2) providing resources for San Franciscans to utilize in protecting their mental health; 3)
emphasizing the need for appropriate, immediate, high quality, and accessible services for all
people with mental health conditions; and 4) ensure that services and treatment respect the
constitutional rights of individuals; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the Department of Public Health, and Office of the Mayor support and prioritize continued diagnostic testing for mental health and precision mental health treatments; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the Department of Public Health, and Office of the Mayor to support accessible low barrier treatment options such as widespread mental health screening, telehealth options for all, and increased access to inpatient mental health services.
Resolution supporting National Mental Health Awareness Month and efforts of mental health service providers to implement low-barrier, quality services in order to overcome the negative impacts of COVID-19 to a person’s mental health and wellness during the global pandemic.

May 12, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 5/12/2020 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

05/22/2020
Date Approved