

**THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA RESOLUTION OBSERVING
*Mental Illness Awareness Month, October 2001***

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WHEREAS, The strongest weapon in the fight against mental illness is science. During the past decade, wide arrays of effective new medications for severe mental illness have been developed. Genetic discoveries and progressive brain research continue moving us one step closer to sound medical answers for living with, and perhaps one day even curing or preventing, severe mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, A new perception of mental illness is emerging—one that focuses on early intervention, effective treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery. No area of health care is changing more than mental health. Advances are prompted by better science and more research, the information revolution, the important role consumers play in advocating for themselves, and family members who speak out for their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Barriers to mental illness recovery are falling one by one. California is one of more than 30 states that have adopted measures to ensure health insurance parity. In addition, PACT (Program for Assertive Community Treatment) a 24-hour a day, seven days a week mobile service program for persons with the most severe mental illnesses, is being replicated in communities throughout the county; and

WHEREAS, Treatment works—if a person with a mental illness can get it. Science has greatly expanded our understanding and treatment of severe mental illnesses. No one who needs care should be denied access to high quality, tailored mental health services; and

WHEREAS, California's mental health system is in crisis. Despite the tremendous strides in the fight against mental illness, far too many still struggle to get treatments and services we know are critical to recovery. Open access cannot be achieved until the public and policy-makers have a shared commitment to care for people with mental illness; and

WHEREAS, Mental health funding is inadequate to ensure all Californians who need mental health services have access to care, according to the Little Hoover Commission's report, "BEING THERE, Making a Commitment to Mental Health." Furthermore, existing resources fail to create uniform incentives for improvement and can prevent local authorities from providing cost-effective, efficient care; and

WHEREAS, Research on mental illness is significantly under funded in relation to its economic and public health impact. Depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder account for an estimated 20 percent of the world's total disability resulting from all diseases and injuries. Yet for every U.S. taxpayer dollar spent on medical research, less than one cent is allocated to schizophrenia, one of the most disabling mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Stigma continues to be the single most significant barrier to people getting the help they need. As underscored by the U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, in his 1999 landmark report on mental health, stigma toward mental illness remains a pervasive and potentially lethal barrier to mental illness recovery;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors joins the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of San Mateo County, The Mental Health Board and the Peninsula Network of Mental Health Clients in observance of "Mental Illness Awareness Month" during October, 2001, and supports efforts to increase scientific knowledge about mental illness, to overcome the stereotypes that have impeded persons affected by mental illness from receiving compassionate care in the community and to improve care for those persons.

DATED: October 4, 2001