

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A079
Title: Mental Health Sunday
Proposer: Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness
Topic: Health

Directly Related: (Attached)

None

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2022-A107	Utilize Resources to Support People with Mental Health Challenges
2022-A108	Authorize, Fund and Recommend Training in Mental Health First Aid
2022-A109	Create New Curriculum to Train Clergy in Mental Health Pastoral Care
2022-A110	Expand the Task Force on Ministry to Individuals with Mental Illness
2018-C034	Create a Task Force on Mental Illness
1991-D088	Encourage Understanding of Mental Illness and the Needs of the Mentally Ill

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).

A079 - Mental Health Sunday

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: Yes

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church designate as Mental Health Awareness Sunday the Sunday closest to October 10th, which is World Mental Health Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the common objective is to raise awareness of the impact that stigma has on preventing open dialogue about mental health and mental illness with our families, our Church, and our communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church encourage the education of its clergy and laity on how to support individuals with mental illness and their caregivers; and be it further

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church send this resolution to each Diocese of the Episcopal Church to post a reminder through their primary communication channels to encourage participation in Mental Health Awareness Sunday; and be it further

Resolved, That we add our voices and prayers with those around the world seeking care and attention to treat mental illness.

Explanation

Mental illness thrives in the darkness, the darkness of isolation, the darkness of ignorance, and the darkness of negative stigma. It is through public acknowledgement that we can bring relief, bring support, bring the light and love of Christ to all God's children. Just talking about mental illness can save a life. We hope that the church talks about Mental health and wellness throughout the year. The Episcopal Church is rooted in the tradition of corporate worship. If all faith communities in an area are focusing on Mental Health, it will magnify the impact in the world.

As for the date, October 10th, this is the globally recognized date for mental health awareness since 1992. We would like to recognize that In the United States of America, the entire month of May is designated Mental Health Awareness Month since 1949 and supported by various federal agencies. Additionally, the US honors National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in July since 2008. There are many other national and global recognition dates that challenge the church's calendar for the number of celebrations. We have focused on the most inclusive of the celebration dates.

October is also an advantages time of year for reflecting on Children and Youth Mental Health as it is generally the start of the new school year. The inter-generational possibilities to discuss the stress of life will help to normalize conversations around the impact of stress and burn-out on Mental Wellness.

Once we have started to reduce the stigma to mental illness through these annual celebrations, we expect leaders to want to go deeper in how they can respond to the epidemic of mental illness. This is where resources and education are important. The Task Force on Individuals with Mental Illness has prepared a first set of resources which are shared as part of the 81st General Convention Bluebook. The Task Force is also recommending Mental Health First Aid as a preferred training for most faith communities. We commend other resources from the organizations and groups that are mentioned in the Bluebook Report Thanksgivings.

Lastly, we know that it can be simple to pass a resolution at General Convention, but much harder to implement. We hope by commending this resolution to communication offices of our various diocese, it will help remind our churches of the work done at convention. We understand that not all parishes or faith communities will be able to participate in Mental Health Awareness Sunday. But for those that are able, a gentle reminder can act as a launch pad for sharing ideas across networks. This also gives a chance for Diocesan level initiatives about mental health to have time in the spotlight.

As a church, it is only right that we close in a prayer. Prayer will not solve a medical issue, but it comforts and reminds us of the strength that God provides in times of difficulty.