

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF DOUGLAS, COLORADO**

**RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING MAY 2024 AS MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS MONTH**

Whereas mental health is part of overall health and is something we all have; and

Whereas mental health conditions are common in the United States with over 20% of U.S. adults and 17% of U.S. youth ages 6-17 experiencing a mental health problem; and

Whereas approximately one-half of chronic mental health conditions begin by the age of 14 and three-quarters by age 24; and

Whereas long delays – on average 10 years, but sometimes decades – occur between the time symptoms first appear and when individuals get help, and less than half of adults and approximately half of youth experiencing a mental/behavioral health condition each year receive treatment; and

Whereas suicide ranked as the 8th leading cause of death in Colorado in 2022, and remains the number 1 cause of death among Colorado youth and young adults; and in 2020, 51% of men and 68% of women in Colorado who died by suicide had a known mental health condition; and

Whereas in 2023, over 70,000 Douglas County adults, or 18.3%, reported poor mental health, meaning 14 or more days out of the last 30 days their lives were impacted due to poor mental health; and

Whereas the Douglas County Mental Health Initiative (DCMHI) was established ten years ago in 2014 under the leadership of the Board of County Commissioners to address mental health system gaps, and is currently represented by over 50 organizational members dedicated to system change and improvements in mental and behavioral health outcomes in Douglas County; and

Whereas the DCMHI launched the Community Response Team program seven years ago in May 2017, and since then has served more than 7,500 unique individuals, prevented 1,430 unnecessary trips to the emergency department for mental health crisis, prevented 589 jail bookings, released 4,200 law enforcement officers back to service and has saved over \$10.4 million in Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Department and Jail costs alone; and

Whereas the Community Response Team program now has nine teams, including two youth specific teams, serving the entire county every day of the week with 360 hours of service availability; and

Whereas the DCMHI launched The Care Compact in 2020 to provide care coordination for adults with complex mental health, substance use, intellectual and developmental disabilities and unmet basic needs, and which has now served over 120 adults resulting in reductions in the use of crisis and emergency services. This Spring, DCMHI will launch the Youth Care Compact; and

Whereas the DCMHI collaborative is actively working on multiple strategies to improve the mental health network of care, fill gaps, and address the persistent stigma that surrounds mental health conditions and substance use disorders. DCMHI has aligned with behavioral health promotion and injury prevention priorities in the Douglas County Health Department's 2023 – 2026 prevention plan, and looks forward to programming collaborations within the 23rd Judicial District; and

Whereas the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners has dedicated over \$9,000,000 of the County's \$68.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding to mental and behavioral health programming, including investments in Veterans' mental health services, an all-ages Walk-In Crisis Center and a child and adolescent Crisis Stabilization Unit, suicide prevention, expansion of the Community Response Team and Care Compact programs, community education men's and veteran's mental health, and a funding contribution to implement the 9-8-8 crisis and support line; and

Whereas the DCMHI supports and encourages:

- Early identification and treatment, which can make a difference in successful management of mental illness and recovery
- Maintenance of mental well-being and learning the symptoms of mental illness in order to get help when it is needed
- Engagement of every citizen and community in ending the silence and stigma that for too long has surrounded mental illness and discouraged people from getting help; and
- Public education and civic activities, which can encourage mental health and help improve the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Douglas, Colorado do hereby proclaim May 1 through May 31, 2024 as Mental Health Awareness Month to shine a light on mental health conditions and fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for equitable access to care.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, this 23rd day of April 2024 in Castle Rock, Douglas County, Colorado.

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF DOUGLAS, COLORADO**

BY:

GEORGE TEAL, Chair

ATTEST:

KRISTIN RANDETT, Clerk to the Board