

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Resolution HHS-20-38

A RESOLUTION ON IMPROVING ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

WHEREAS, suicide is the third leading cause of death among all African American children ages ten to nineteen;

WHEREAS, between 2001 and 2017, suicide rates doubled among African American girls aged 13-19, and for African American boys of the same age it rose by 60%;

WHEREAS, the rate of suicides for African American children between the ages of five and twelve has exceeded that of all other ethnic groups and more than a third of elementary school-aged suicides involved African American children;

WHEREAS, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) has established an Emergency Taskforce on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health to raise awareness and identify solutions to this growing problem;

WHEREAS, adolescent well-care examinations are visits that include physical, developmental, behavioral and psychosocial screening and assessment;

WHEREAS, after the age of 12 years old, unless they need immunizations, get sick, or need a school or sports physical, children are no longer required to see a medical provider;

WHEREAS, American Academy of Pediatrics' Bright Futures Guidelines recommends annual well-care visits during adolescence;

WHEREAS, annual well-care visits during adolescence promote healthy behaviors, prevent risky ones, and detect conditions that can interfere with physical, social, and emotional development;

WHEREAS, a key component of this visit for teens is the universal administration of the PHQ-9, a depression screening tool that begins at age 12;

WHEREAS, Pediatricians and family physicians can possibly diagnose depression and/or other mental and physical health problems early, and save lives; and

WHEREAS, including Pediatricians to be involved along with law enforcement, teachers, students and parents in the mental health discussion can increase the chances of spotting and helping a child dealing with mental health issues.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes the importance of annual well-care visits during adolescence;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges all states to consider options like mandating annual adolescence well-care visits for youth ages 12-19 and ensuring they are affordable to all students, increasing access to mental health services overall, and increasing mental health services in schools in order for more youth to be screened for mental health issues;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL supports schools and school districts ensuring that school counselors and mental health counselors be available to all students at the commonly accepted appropriate ratios to the relative student population, to ensure that students have reliable access to mental health counselling; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative Bobby DuBose (FL)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Health and Human Services Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chair: Representative David J. Mack, III (SC)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 6, 2019

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President