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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 36

Session of  
2005

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INTRODUCED BY ORIE, KITCHEN, VANCE, TOMLINSON, RAFFERTY,  
RHOADES, WOZNIAK, MADIGAN, STACK, COSTA, LOGAN AND  
TARTAGLIONE, MARCH 23, 2005

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REFERRED TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE, MARCH 23, 2005

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A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish a  
2 task force to study the availability and accessibility of  
3 intensive and appropriate community services and supports for  
4 persons with serious mental illness, addictive disorders and  
5 co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders; to  
6 determine the individual and community consequences of  
7 leaving untreated and undertreating such illnesses and  
8 disorders and the relationship to incarceration and  
9 homelessness; to determine the gaps in private insurance  
10 coverage and public funding of services for individuals  
11 suffering from such illnesses and disorders; and to make  
12 recommendations on addressing these gaps and meeting  
13 individual needs while respecting individual rights and  
14 dignity.

15 WHEREAS, Many incidents of crime in the community are  
16 attributed to persons with untreated serious mental illnesses  
17 and addictive disease; and

18 WHEREAS, Approximately 3% of the 35,000 people incarcerated  
19 in Pennsylvania's State Correctional Institutions suffer from  
20 serious mental illness, 15% suffer from co-occurring mental  
21 illness and substance use disorders and 90% of those people  
22 incarcerated have addictive disorders; and

23 WHEREAS, Five percent of persons who have serious mental

1 illness are homeless and a high percentage of the single adult  
2 homeless population suffers from addictive disorders or co-  
3 occurring mental illness and substance use disorders; and

4 WHEREAS, Support of family and friends, quality of treatment,  
5 financial resources and State support are necessary for  
6 Pennsylvania's citizens with serious mental illnesses, addictive  
7 disorders and co-occurring mental illness and substance use  
8 disorders; and

9 WHEREAS, The availability, accessibility and quality of  
10 community services are often variable and difficult for persons  
11 with serious mental illness, addictive disorders or co-occurring  
12 disorders to obtain and maintain; and

13 WHEREAS, Individuals with untreated or undertreated serious  
14 mental illness, addictive disorders or co-occurring mental  
15 illness and substance use disorders seek help but often may not  
16 receive adequate treatment due to lack of private insurance  
17 coverage, limited coverage or limited public funding for  
18 services; and

19 WHEREAS, Individuals with untreated or undertreated serious  
20 mental illness, addictive disorders or co-occurring mental  
21 illness and substance use disorders are likely to become  
22 homeless or become subject to the custody of the criminal  
23 justice system without getting well; therefore be it

24 RESOLVED (The House of Representatives concurring), That the  
25 General Assembly direct the Joint State Government Commission to  
26 establish a task force of four members of the Senate and four  
27 members of the House of Representatives to undertake a study of  
28 the delivery system of behavioral health services in this  
29 Commonwealth to ascertain whether it is meeting the needs of  
30 individuals with serious mental illness, addictive disease or

1 co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders and  
2 their families and if it is not meeting those needs to recommend  
3 appropriate corrective measures such as addressing housing needs  
4 and providing psychosocial rehabilitation services and  
5 continuous treatment teams; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the President pro tempore of the Senate, the  
7 Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
8 Representatives and the Minority Leader of the House of  
9 Representatives each appoint two members to the task force; and  
10 be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the task force be authorized to create an  
12 advisory committee to assist the task force, to include  
13 representatives from the Department of Public Welfare through  
14 its Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs, the  
15 Department of Health through its Bureau of Drug and Alcohol  
16 Programs, the Department of Corrections and individuals  
17 representing community mental health providers and consumers.  
18 The advisory committee shall include individuals developing a  
19 white paper for the Department of Public Welfare addressing co-  
20 occurring addictions; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the initial area of task force review be the  
22 availability and accessibility of intensive and appropriate  
23 community services and supports for persons with severe mental  
24 illness, addictive disorders and co-occurring mental illness and  
25 substance use disorders and their families; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the task force study the individual, the  
27 family and the community consequences of untreated and  
28 undertreated serious mental illness, addictive disorders and co-  
29 occurring mental illness and substance use disorders and the  
30 relationship to homelessness and incarceration on individuals,

1 their families and the community; and be it further  
2 RESOLVED, That the task force report its findings and  
3 recommendations to the General Assembly as soon as possible.