




Senate of Pennsylvania

Senator LeAnna M. Washington  
4<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District

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MEMORANDUM

**Date:** May 18, 2011  
**To:** All Senators  
**From:** Senator LeAnna M. Washington   
**Subject:** Co-sponsorship request – **Resolution: “Older Americans Mental Health Week”**

I will be introducing a resolution recognizing May 21-27, 2011 as “Older Americans Mental Health Week” in Pennsylvania. This is a wonderful opportunity to spread the message that mental illness is not a normal part of aging. Public awareness increases a community’s understanding of mental illness and reduces the stigma that keeps many older Americans from seeking help.

During Older Americans’ Mental Health Week, we will continue to tell the American public and policy makers that: mental illness is not a normal part of aging; mental illnesses are real, common and treatable; the more people know, the more they can help themselves and others; and healthy adults continue to learn, enjoy life and contribute to society.

According to The Older Women’s League (OWL), one in four American adults have a diagnosable mental disorder and less than one quarter of older adults with mental illness get any type of mental attention. Additionally, approximately 6% of older adults have a diagnosable depressive illness and studies have shown that older adults have the highest suicide rate in the country.

To indicate your interest in co-sponsoring this important resolution, please contact Cindie Watkins in my office by calling 7-1427 or emailing [cwatkins@pasenate.com](mailto:cwatkins@pasenate.com).

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

RESOLUTION

INTRODUCED \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_, District  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_, District  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_, District  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_, District  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_, District  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_

See next page for additional co-sponsors.

<b>Referred to Committee on</b>	
Date _____	20 _____
Reported _____	20 _____
<b>As Committed-Amended</b>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	
_____	
By Hon. _____	

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the week of May 21 through 27, 2011, as "Older  
2 Americans Mental Health Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Mental health disorders, though widespread in the  
4 population, are not a normal part of aging; and

5 WHEREAS, Recognition and treatment of mental health disorders  
6 is important for healthy aging; and

7 WHEREAS, Persons with a diagnosable mental health disorder  
8 must be able to seek help and have access to appropriate  
9 treatment; and

10 WHEREAS, A reported one in four older adults in the United  
11 States experiences a diagnosable mental health disorder in a  
12 given year; and

13 WHEREAS, Clinical depression, which affects 20% of people  
14 over 65 years of age, is serious but often treatable; and

15 WHEREAS, Suicide prevention campaigns must address the  
16 alarming fact that older adults have the highest suicide rate in  
17 our nation; and

1       WHEREAS, The Senate acknowledges the imperative for  
2 increasing public awareness of the mental health needs of older  
3 adults; and

4       WHEREAS, The Senate urges integrating mental health  
5 professionals and appropriate resources in our communities to  
6 fully support older adults with mental health disorders and  
7 affected caregivers; therefore be it

8       RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize the week of May 21  
9 through 27, 2011, as "Older Americans Mental Health Week" in  
10 Pennsylvania.