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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 874 Session of  
2018

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INTRODUCED BY BULLOCK, CEPHAS, SOLOMON, SIMS, HILL-EVANS, MURT,  
RABB, DEAN, HENNESSEY, KIRKLAND, NEILSON, BIZZARRO,  
DONATUCCI, DIGIROLAMO, CALTAGIRONE, MILLARD, SCHLOSSBERG,  
SCHWEYER, KINSEY AND DALEY, APRIL 26, 2018

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
APRIL 26, 2018

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A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of May 2018 as "Mental Health Awareness in  
2 the Black Community Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Persistent racial inequality and race-based  
4 exclusion in the United States has translated into continuing  
5 mental health disparities among African Americans and a  
6 continuing mental health care gap; and

7 WHEREAS, African Americans are disproportionately affected by  
8 serious psychological distress and mental health disorders; and

9 WHEREAS, Twenty-five percent of African Americans seek and  
10 access mental health services as compared to 40% of individuals  
11 representing other racial groups; and

12 WHEREAS, The American Psychological Association has reported  
13 that young adult African Americans who have acquired higher  
14 levels of education are less likely than other young adults to  
15 seek mental health services; and

16 WHEREAS, African Americans receive low rates of outpatient

1 care and high rates of emergency care; and

2 WHEREAS, Disparities in mental health outcomes exist even  
3 after access to the health care system has been improved; and

4 WHEREAS, The inaugural Black Brain Campaign in 2016 spurred  
5 Philadelphia-area clinicians to explore mental health reforms  
6 for African Americans; and

7 WHEREAS, Marriage and family therapists Jaynay Johnson and  
8 Farida Saleem-Boyer established the Black Brain Campaign to  
9 strengthen families within the African-American community; and

10 WHEREAS, The structure provided by a cohesive family and  
11 extended family is essential in confronting racial disparities,  
12 transcending cultural and bureaucratic barriers and reducing  
13 stigmas and discrimination; and

14 WHEREAS, School-based counselors and community-based  
15 counselors are also essential in coordinating available mental  
16 health resources and addressing the silence and the fears that  
17 can perpetuate cycles of trauma; and

18 WHEREAS, Other mental health professionals, health care  
19 providers and social service providers are vital in confronting  
20 provider bias where it exists; and

21 WHEREAS, Health policy experts and advocates are also  
22 important to close the racial gaps in mental health status and  
23 mental health care; and

24 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives recognizes an  
25 imperative for health care policy reforms, interventions and  
26 initiatives to eliminate mental health disparities based on  
27 race, ethnicity, education, income or geography; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the  
29 month of May 2018 as "Mental Health Awareness in the Black  
30 Community Month" in Pennsylvania.