

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 31–
ASSEMBLYWOMAN OHRENSCHALL

MAY 27, 2003

Read and Adopted

SUMMARY—Encourages recognition of mental illness and suicide in young people of Nevada as public health crises and recommends implementation of evidence-based initiatives to screen children and adolescents for mental disorders. (BDR R-978)

~

EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~fornitted-material~~ is material to be omitted.

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Encouraging the recognition of mental illness and suicide in the young people of Nevada as public health crises and recommending the implementation of evidence-based initiatives to screen children and adolescents for mental disorders.

1 WHEREAS, Over the past 20 years, advances in scientific
2 research have changed perceptions concerning the mental health of
3 children and adolescents and demonstrated that the same mental
4 disorders that afflict adults can also occur in young people; and

5 WHEREAS, Scientific research has also demonstrated that early
6 identification and treatment of mental disorders in children and
7 adolescents greatly increase the chance of a favorable prognosis;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, In January 2001, the Surgeon General of the United
10 States noted that while 1 out of every 10 young people in this nation
11 suffers from mental illness that is severe enough to cause some level
12 of impairment, only 1 out of 5 receives the mental health treatment
13 that is needed; and

14 WHEREAS, The World Health Organization has reported that
15 neuropsychiatric disorders in young people will rise by more than
16 50 percent by 2020, making such disorders one of the top five
17 causes of disability, morbidity and mortality among children and
18 adolescents; and



1 WHEREAS, Studies concerning psychological autopsy have
2 found that 90 percent of young people who end their own lives have
3 depression or another diagnosable mental or substance abuse
4 disorder at the time of their deaths, verifying a link between mental
5 illness and suicide; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1999, the Surgeon General first recognized that
7 mental illness and substance abuse disorders are, in fact, the greatest
8 risk factors for suicidal behavior and that properly identifying and
9 treating mental illness and substance abuse disorders are important
10 parts of suicide prevention activities; and

11 WHEREAS, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
12 Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services
13 recently reported that in 1999 almost 3 million young people were at
14 risk for suicide, but only 36 percent received mental health
15 treatment; and

16 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of
17 the Department of Health and Human Services recently reported that
18 in 2000 suicide was the third leading cause of death among persons
19 15 to 24 years of age; and

20 WHEREAS, Studies completed by the Centers for Disease
21 Control and Prevention reveal that each year in the United States,
22 almost as many adolescents and young adults commit suicide as die
23 from leukemia, birth defects, pneumonia and influenza, and AIDS
24 combined; and

25 WHEREAS, In January 2001, the Surgeon General issued a goal
26 to "improve the assessment and recognition of mental health needs
27 in children" in part by encouraging "early identification of mental
28 health needs in existing preschool, childcare, education, health,
29 welfare, juvenile justice, and substance abuse treatment systems";
30 and

31 WHEREAS, Several states have recognized mental illness and
32 suicide in young people as public health crises, some even before
33 the initiative of the Department of Health and Human Services, and,
34 as of today, the majority of states have either developed or are in the
35 process of developing plans to identify mental illness and prevent
36 suicide among this segment of the population; and

37 WHEREAS, The efforts, initiatives and activities of the Federal
38 and State Governments should be used to support evidence-based
39 practices for identifying mental illness in children and adolescents
40 and preventing suicide among our young people; and

41 WHEREAS, A program known as the "Columbia TeenScreen
42 Program," developed at the Division of Child and Adolescent
43 Psychiatry of Columbia University, has been proven successful,
44 offers technical assistance for implementation of a screening



1 program and provides all the components for such a program at no
2 charge at this time; now, therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE
4 SENATE CONCURRING, That the members of the 72nd Session of
5 the Nevada Legislature recognize that mental illness and suicide
6 among young people are public health crises in this state and in this
7 nation and that all residents of Nevada should make the
8 identification of mental disorders and the prevention of suicide
9 among the young people of this state a public health priority; and be
10 it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Nevada Legislature recommends that every
12 young person should be screened once during childhood or
13 adolescence to identify mental illness and prevent suicide; and be it
14 further

15 RESOLVED, That such a screening and identification process
16 should employ sound, evidence-based tools; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That all adolescents in middle school and high
18 school should have equal access to such a screening process; and be
19 it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and
21 transmit a copy of this resolution to Governor Kenny C. Guinn, the
22 Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education,
23 the Director of the Department of Human Resources, the Court
24 Administrator of the Supreme Court for distribution to the juvenile
25 courts, and the Nevada Parent Teacher Association.

