

The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, mental health disparities persist in Washington State and all Washingtonians should have the opportunity to access and receive equitable mental health services, and Washington State has the fifth-highest rate of mental illness in the United States, with 1-in-5 adults experiencing a mental illness; and

WHEREAS, bringing attention to the mental health needs of African American, Asian American, Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islander communities, and other underserved populations benefits all Washingtonians; and

WHEREAS, communities of color face greater stigma and systemic barriers to care and are less likely to seek out and receive mental health services; and

WHEREAS, fostering efforts and partnerships to strengthen the capacities of local communities to address the disproportionate burden of mental illnesses in communities of color is crucial to addressing this issue; and

WHEREAS, public awareness and culturally and linguistically-appropriate mental health education, prevention, and services are essential to improving the mental well-being of communities of color; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities submitted recommendations to reduce disparities in behavioral health in its 2012 *State Policy Action Plan to Eliminate Health Disparities*; and

WHEREAS, state, local, and community agencies must work together to increase public awareness of mental health and to promote effective strategies to address mental illness in communities of color;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim July 2016 as

Mental Health Awareness in Communities of Color Month

in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance.



Signed this 14th day of June, 2016

A blue ink signature of Governor Jay Inslee.

Governor Jay Inslee