

THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 25

Approved January 24, 2013

WHEREAS, Chapter 40.1, Section 5-13 of the Rhode Island General Laws establishes the position of a Mental Health Advocate for the State of Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, The Office of the Mental Health Advocate is an independent state agency staffed by attorneys who provide an array of free legal, investigative, and advocacy services, regardless of age, to prevent inappropriate admissions to psychiatric facilities, to protect the rights and enhance the dignity of persons in mental health treatment and inpatient substance abuse treatment, and to reduce the stigma associated with mental disabilities and substance abuse addictions; and

WHEREAS, The Mental Health Advocate has a number of extremely important responsibilities, including acting as counsel for indigent persons in certain judicial proceedings, ensuring that those in treatment are apprised of their rights, and serving as the formal liaison for community based mental health clinics and other community facilities; and

WHEREAS, There is a growing consensus that the United States' mental health care system is not adequately serving those suffering from mental illness; and

WHEREAS, According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, access to mental health services is a serious and growing problem, with nearly 90 million Americans living in federally-designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas in 2010; and

WHEREAS, A recent National Association for Mental Illness report found that between 2008 and 2011, Rhode Island saw a 65 percent increase in the number of children living with mental illness boarding in public hospital emergency rooms, with no place to go for treatment; and

WHEREAS, The position of Mental Health Advocate has been vacant since April 2012; and

WHEREAS, The City Council has a moral obligation to protect and improve the health, including mental health, of the people of Providence.


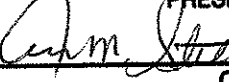
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence hereby respectfully request that the Governor appoint a Mental Health Advocate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to Governor Lincoln Chafee, and to the members of the Providence delegation in the General Assembly.

IN CITY
COUNCIL

JAN 17 2013

FINAL READING
READ AND PASSED


PRESIDENT

CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.


Mayor

Date: 1/24/13