

2015 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 606

Designating May, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as Maternal Mental Health Month in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 28, 2015

Agreed to by the Senate, February 24, 2015

WHEREAS, the health and safety of all Virginians is important to the happiness, well-being, and prosperity of the Commonwealth's families and communities; and

WHEREAS, up to 80 percent of new mothers experience changes in their emotional health following childbirth, regardless of age, culture, or socioeconomic status; and

WHEREAS, 15 to 20 percent of pregnant women and new mothers experience moderate to severe symptoms, collectively known as perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, including depression, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other conditions; and

WHEREAS, one to two in every 1,000 mothers in the United States will experience postpartum psychosis, a medical emergency that poses an immediate threat of suicide or infanticide; and

WHEREAS, perinatal mood and anxiety disorders can develop at any time during pregnancy and the first 12 months after childbirth; they impact not only the mother, but also the child, father, and entire family unit; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that untreated perinatal mood and anxiety disorders during pregnancy or postpartum can negatively affect birth outcomes and infant development, including mother-infant attachment and bonding, infant mental health and brain development, long-term social and cognitive development of the child, and the well-being of the entire family unit; and

WHEREAS, maternal risk factors for developing perinatal mood and anxiety disorders can be reliably identified, assessed, and treated by health care providers and public health systems; and

WHEREAS, with proper awareness, education, intervention, and resources, perinatal mood and anxiety disorders are highly treatable, with interventions demonstrating positive effects on both mothers and children; and

WHEREAS, increasing public awareness among all Virginia health care providers and families on the prevalence, identification, and treatment of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders has significant potential to save lives and prevent the unnecessary suffering experienced by many families during pregnancy or following childbirth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate May, in 2015 and in each succeeding year, as Maternal Mental Health Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to Dr. Natasha Sriraman, board member and education chair of the Virginia chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

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