

### ***Resolution on Mental Illness/Mental Health***

***Resolved***, that the 166<sup>th</sup> convention of the Diocese of California calls upon all congregations to become more supportive and safe places where those living with mental health diagnoses and their families can come for acceptance, information and the unconditional love of God. In order to better educate clergy and faith leaders about the physical, emotional and social effects of mental illness upon individuals and families, as well as creating bridges with agencies that provide information, services and support, and be it further

***Resolved***, that the Diocese will partner with their congregations and leaders to help equip them with the tools, references and support they need to become agents of reconciliation for those living with mental health diagnoses (including but not limited to information offered through continuing education for clergy and lay leaders, the Resource Center, and the Diocesan Web Site). *This may include developing an educational tool for use in and by congregations, and that resources for this development will be included in the 2017 Diocesan Budget, and be it further*

***Resolved*** that Diocesan staff and congregational leaders will partner together to communicate vigilantly with their local, state and national community organizers, media, law enforcers and legislators toward eliminating dangerous stigmas pertaining to brain disorders, and advocating for urgent reforms and funding for mental health care.

**Faithfully submitted, The Rev. Joyce Parry-Moore, Rector, Saint Bartholomew's Livermore;**

**Sponsored by: Diocesan Task Force on Mental Illness/Mental Health**

**Supported by: Rev. Julia McCray Goldsmith, Diocesan Staff**

#### **Explanation:**

*All Episcopalians are called by our baptismal covenant to "support the dignity of all human beings", and by the Gospel to love all of our neighbors, and congregations and faith leaders often find themselves in positions of serving mental health consumers and their families, both in and outside the church.*

Since the 1980's, the growing majority of adult mental health consumers, with little or no access to quality care, find themselves living on the streets or in prisons, rather than in places of healing and grace. Today, One in Five Americans live with the physical, emotional and social effects of mental illness, and

Uninformed stereotypes about those living with brain disorders found in media, language and public policies promote negative attitudes about mental health consumers which discourage them from seeking help. Mental illness has been proven to be an organic condition, no more deserving of shame or blame than any other chronic physical disorder, such as diabetes or heart disease.

**Two primary goals of the Diocesan Task Force on Mental Illness/Mental Health:**

- 1) To help educate all Episcopal churches and faith leaders about mental illness by connecting them to resources – both in and outside the faith community -- for information and support, by encouraging culturally inclusive, interfaith and ecumenical partnerships, and by facilitating welcoming conversations in congregations;**
- 2) To advocate for discussion and action with legislators, media and community leaders to break stigmas around mental illness and implement/fund urgent mental health care reforms.**

DRAFT