

## A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, across the country, nearly 10 million women and one million men are battling illnesses such as anorexia and bulimia and millions more are suffering from binge eating disorder; and

WHEREAS, anorexia, bulimia, and compulsive overeating are problems that are misunderstood, stigmatized, underfunded, and undertreated; and

WHEREAS, anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric disorder and is linked to an 18 fold increase in the risk of death, with up to 20 percent of sufferers dying of malnutrition and suicide; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders are associated with substantial psychological problems, including depression, substance abuse, and suicide, and can lead to major medical complications, including cardiac arrhythmia, cognitive impairment, certain cancers, osteoporosis, infertility, kidney failure, and, most seriously, death; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders cut across race, color, gender, and socioeconomic categories; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders are increasing in younger age groups with children as young as seven years old suffering; and

WHEREAS, genetic, social, familial factors, and media pressures are all known to be related to eating disorders; and

WHEREAS, many insurance companies disallow or limit reimbursements for eating disorders, forcing doctors to discharge patients with anorexia nervosa too early, placing patients in life-threatening situations; and

WHEREAS, delayed care, more severe symptoms at admission, and premature treatment termination are each linked to high rates of relapse, but insurance companies continue to make these factors common practice; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders are treatable when diagnosed and treated early and sufficiently; and

WHEREAS, eating disorders should be taken as seriously as the obesity epidemic and treated as the public health crisis they have become and government should take a proactive role in prevention education and improved access to care regarding all forms of eating disorders, including binge eating and extreme dieting, and make access to treatment available for those already suffering with eating disorders; and

WHEREAS, the Assembly is concerned with preserving and protecting the health of the citizens of Alabama.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ALABAMA ASSEMBLY that the members of this body recognize the last week in February as the annual National Eating Disorders Awareness Week, an opportunity for citizens and policy makers to learn more about eating disorders, the obstacles to treatment, and to work toward helping people overcome, and prevent, these life-threatening diseases.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Division of Public Health of the Department of Human Resources is urged to undertake a study of the public health impact of eating disorders in the State of Alabama and the need for programs or policies to enhance education, awareness, detection, and prevention of the disease in the general population.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Division of Public Health of the Department of Human Resources is urged to undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any actions or legislation as necessary or appropriate.