

RESOLUTION NO. 14

SUBMITTED BY:

THE HONORABLE DAVID N. CICILLINE
MAYOR OF PROVIDENCE

THE HONORABLE RON DELLUMS
MAYOR OF OAKLAND

THE HONORABLE MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG
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THE HONORABLE MANUEL A. DIAZ
MAYOR OF MIAMI

THE HONORABLE GREG NICKELS
MAYOR OF SEATTLE

THE HONORABLE CORY BOOKER
MAYOR OF NEWARK, NJ

THE HONORABLE THOMAS M. MENINO
MAYOR OF BOSTON

THE HONORABLE SHEILA DIXON
MAYOR OF BALTIMORE

CLOSING THE ADDICTION TREATMENT GAP

WHEREAS, right now more than 23 million Americans suffer from alcohol and drug addiction and need treatment but only one in 10 of them (2.4 million) receives the treatment they need; and

WHEREAS, the gap between the millions of people who need addiction treatment and the few who get it is taking a toll on our health care system. Broadening insurance coverage for treatment programs, increasing public funding for treatment, and achieving greater program efficiency and quality, will alleviate the significant burden that is currently weighing on our health care system; and

WHEREAS, even though addiction is an acknowledged, treatable disease, cost continues to be the number one factor keeping those who want help from the treatment they need. Of those who say they need treatment but do not get it, 31.2 percent say they do not receive treatment because they do not have health insurance coverage and cannot afford to pay for the cost of treatment. Addiction is a health issue and it should be treated and covered as one; and

WHEREAS, untreated addiction taxes our health care system. One out of every 14 hospital stays – an estimated 2.3 million stays a year – is related to substance use disorders. More than 1.7 million emergency department visits a year are associated with drug use. Inpatient, emergency room and total healthcare costs decline by 39 percent, 35 percent and 26 percent respectively after patients who suffer from alcohol or drug addiction receive treatment; and

WHEREAS, untreated addiction is known to result in lost productivity, crime and criminal justice, family and community problems, and even death. In addition to its significant impacts on health and health care costs, it causes an increased demand for

public services from child welfare and family support to public safety – undermining the strength of our communities and causing family distress; and

WHEREAS, treating addiction yields significant, proven positive economic benefits. When people are treated for addiction the costs associated with crime, accidents, absenteeism from work, and other areas, are all reduced. In fact, total savings associated with treating addiction can exceed the costs of that treatment by up to 12 to 1, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors encourages that the science of addiction as a preventable and treatable disease drive alcohol and drug policy at a federal, state, and local level, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors calls on the Congress to pass legislation expanding funding for alcohol and drug prevention, treatment, and recovery services for all who need them, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors calls on the Congress to repeal discriminatory laws against people with addiction histories who have been in the criminal justice system , including, but not limited to, the ban on welfare assistance and food stamps; access to higher education funding; drivers license restrictions; and employment barriers, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors urges cities to implement alternatives to incarceration programs for non-violent offenders with serious drug and/or alcohol addiction, where treatment would be more effective than incarceration, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors stresses the importance of federal, state, and local governments to provide specialized prevention, treatment, and recovery support to veterans returning from active duty – particularly veterans who are suffering from or are at high risk for post traumatic stress syndrome and alcohol and drug problems.

Projected Cost: Unknown