

State of Alabama Proclamation by the Governor

WHEREAS, mental illnesses, substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders affect millions of individuals, as well as their concerned families and friends; and

WHEREAS, data reveals approximately 1 in 5 adults, or 43.8 million, aged 19 and older in the United States experiences mental illness, and 1 in 5 youth aged 13 to 18, or 21.4% experiences a serious mental illness in a given year; and

WHEREAS, data reveals approximately 21.6 million Americans aged 12 and older were classified with substance dependence or abuse; and

WHEREAS, approximately 7.9 million adults experience the coexistence of both a mental health and a substance use disorder, a condition that is known as having a co-occurring disorder; and

WHEREAS, this year marks the inaugural year of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH), hosting a Workforce Development Forum in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC), and Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM), which seeks to increase the number of college and university students that choose to join these specialized disciplines; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to educate our students, communities, policymakers, friends and family members, health care providers and businesses that mental illnesses, substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders are treatable and that people should seek assistance for these conditions with the same urgency as they would any other health condition; and

WHEREAS, by 2020, mental and substance use disorders will surpass all physical diseases as a major cause of disability worldwide; and

WHEREAS, this year's Workforce Development Forum, emphasizes the need of the addiction and mental health field to address the current opioid crisis, marijuana, alcohol and other substance use and mental health disorders. The benefits of preventing and overcoming mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders are significant and valuable to individuals, families and communities. Supportive individuals, systems, and communities are catalysts of societal change; and

WHEREAS, April 17, 2017 has been designated by the Alabama Department of Mental Health, as Inaugural Workforce Development Forum Day, with the host site, AUM, and satellite universities/affiliates throughout the state highlighting this valuable profession; and

WHEREAS, to help achieve the goals of the Forum, SAMHSA, NAADAC, ADMH, and AUM invite all students within the state to participate in Workforce Development Day;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert Bentley, Governor of the State of Alabama do hereby proclaim the April 17, 2017 as

Inaugural Workforce Development Forum Day