

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND  
KATHRYN BARGER**

**MARCH 28, 2017**

**Global Summit on Mental Health Culture Change**

The inaugural Global Summit on Mental Health Culture Change (Summit) is scheduled to take place on May 2-3, 2017 in Los Angeles. The goal of the Summit is to advance a culture of awareness, understanding and dialogue about mental health and well-being to improve access to care for those living with mental illness.

The Summit will start with entertainment and music industry kick-off events over the last weekend of April. The Summit will officially launch on Tuesday, May 2nd, 2017 with concurrent conversations convened across the County of Los Angeles (County) as a “Day to Change Direction: Encouraging Dialogue about Mental Health and Well-Being”. This community-based conversation project is designed to engage, educate and inspire participants through dialogue about the many populations facing unique and compelling mental health challenges including children and youth, older adults and caretakers, Lesbian Gay Bi-Sexual Transgender Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ), veterans and military families, homeless persons, and immigrants and refugees. Government, corporate, non-profit and celebrity partners will participate alongside any and all interested residents from across the County.

On May 3rd, 2017, the Summit expert panels will be held with thought leaders from around the world to explore cultural barriers across and within groups, innovative services and treatments, effective movements, and unique opportunities. The goal of

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the Summit is to change direction by building a culture in which all in need of help are better able to seek, find and receive the care and support they deserve.

Mental health conditions remain poorly understood, and one in four people (450 million people) in the world will be affected by mental health disorders at some point in their lives, placing mental health disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide. The current global cost for mental disorders is greater than the cost of diabetes, respiratory disorders, and cancer combined. Half of all mental disorders begin by age fourteen.

Unaddressed mental health concerns lead to tremendous emotional suffering and contribute significantly to unemployment, poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, incarceration, domestic violence and suicide. Many throughout the County suffer emotionally and are unable to recognize the symptoms, do not know where to seek help or are afraid of being judged and, therefore, are unwilling to ask for help.

To counter these destructive forces, the Campaign to Change Direction was launched in 2015 by Give an Hour, a non-profit organization providing pro-bono mental health care to the military and veteran communities. Former First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden, Prince Harry and others have lent their support to date.

Currently almost 400 national organizations, including government agencies such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Guard Bureau and non-profit partners such as the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, have joined the Campaign to Change Direction to educate all persons about the Five Signs of mental suffering (change in personality, withdrawal, agitation, poor self-care, and hopelessness) and thereby encourage everyone to pay attention to mental well-being. Heads Together in the UK, Bell Let's Talk in Canada, and several cities, communities and states are also engaged and inspiring citizens through this global effort.

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**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

- 1) Proclaim May 2nd, 2017 as the "Day to Change Direction for Mental and Emotional Well-Being" in Los Angeles County;
- 2) Direct the Director of the Department of Mental Health, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer, to co-sponsor the inaugural Global Summit (Summit), to be held on May 2-3, 2017, and to identify possible County venues for the Summit;
- 3) Direct the Director of the Department of Mental Health to report back in writing in 20 days with a plan to facilitate "Days of Dialogue" sessions throughout the County on May 2nd, 2017; and
- 4) Encourage all County departments to participate in the Summit to the extent that doing so is consistent with their mission and budgetary constraints, to include allowing employees to work at Summit events on County time, when consistent with County employee contracts as well as Human Resources rules and regulations, and with the authorization of their immediate supervisor and administration.

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(DW/YV)