



WHEREAS, the challenges Coloradans experienced in the past year underscore the importance of addressing mental health and well-being by building a behavioral health system that not only delivers high-quality care but culturally responsive and competent care; and

WHEREAS, Colorado is home to a diverse population which deserves whole-person, person-centered behavioral health care; and

WHEREAS, Colorado continues to invest in behavioral health through the formation of the Behavioral Health Administration and training programs for individuals interested in becoming behavioral health providers; and

WHEREAS, behavioral health needs cross all demographics and geographies, and much more progress is needed in Colorado to increase access to mental health care, support, and resources; and

WHEREAS, Coloradans whose first language was not English were less likely to visit a mental health provider than those whose primary language was English; and

WHEREAS, Black and African American Coloradans as well as Hispanic and Latino Coloradans were more than twice as likely than White Coloradans to report skipping care due to concerns about unfair treatment or consequences; and

WHEREAS, Rural Coloradans have 67 percent fewer psychologists to serve their mental health needs compared to urban Coloradans; and

WHEREAS, Colorado ranks 7th highest for suicide rates in the country; and

WHEREAS, people with serious mental illness comprise 23 percent of total incarcerated individuals in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, prioritizing and providing culturally competent behavioral health care means being responsive to the unique needs and challenges of our underrepresented, marginalized communities and it is critical to address health equity and improve long-term health outcomes for all Coloradans;

THEREFORE, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, do hereby proclaim the month of May 2023, as

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

in the State of Colorado.

GIVEN under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Colorado, this first day of May, 2023



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis".

Jared Polis
Governor