

MENTAL ILLNESS

- WHEREAS, Mental illnesses are diagnosable and treatable illnesses of the brain which can be addressed by caring families and communities working together with service providers; and
- WHEREAS, Research has continually demonstrated the effectiveness of medication in reducing symptoms of mental illness and in helping the child or adolescent to function more effectively with the environment; and
- WHEREAS, Studies show that at any given time, at least one in five children and adolescents (9 to 17 years old) may have a mental health problem ranging from mild to severe and it is estimated that 14% to 20% of America's children (9 to 13 million) will experience one or more emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders that require mental health intervention; and
- WHEREAS, Nearly two-thirds of all children and adolescents with mental health problems are not receiving needed help because of social stigma, inadequate identification methods, or lack of equitable access to treatment and cost of services; and
- WHEREAS, Utah's 1999 legislative session marked the first year since 1992 that the Children's Mental Health line item was not increased in the State's fiscal budget and Utah ranks next to last in dollars allocated per capita for mental health services; and
- WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health estimated that implementing parity for mental health insurance coverage would result in a less than one percent increase in total health care costs in systems already using managed care during a one year period; and when managed care and parity are introduced simultaneously the result is a substantial (30 to 50 percent) reduction in total mental health costs; now, therefore, be it
- Resolved, That Utah PTA facilitate in the education of parents, local PTA leaders, school teachers and school boards, community organizations, churches, and the general public about cause and effects of mental illnesses in children and youth; and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA collaborate with other agencies to compile and widely distribute current information about mental health resources to parents and organizations which serve children and youth; and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA support prevention and intervention initiatives and appropriate state funding for:
- (1) collaborative efforts between the home, school, private physicians, and community resource agencies to create support networks for families,
 - (2) developing uniform methods for screening and referral,
 - (3) increasing the number of school psychologists and social workers, and
 - (4) improving training of primary care physicians in mental illness assessment and treatment; and be it further
- Resolved, That Utah PTA support legislation which requires insurance parity for mental illnesses.