

(S. B. 988)

(No. 9-2016)

(Approved February 26, 2016)

AN ACT

To declare March 30 of each year as “Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day”; and for other purposes.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry out daily tasks. Symptoms of bipolar disorder can be severe. They are different from the normal ups and downs that everyone goes through from time to time. Bipolar disorder symptoms can result in damaged relationships, poor job or school performance, and even suicide. But bipolar disorder can be treated, and people with this illness can lead full and productive lives.¹

Bipolar disorder affects men and women equally. It most often starts between ages 15 and 25. Some people have their first symptoms during childhood, while others may develop symptoms late in life.² The exact cause is not known, but it occurs more often in relatives of people with bipolar disorder. In most people with bipolar disorder, there is no clear cause for the periods (episodes) of extreme happiness (mania) or depression.³

¹ National Institute of Mental Health, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml>

² Id.

³ <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000926.htm>

Bipolar disorder is not easy to spot when it starts. The symptoms may seem like separate problems, not recognized as parts of a larger problem. Some people suffer for years before they are properly diagnosed and treated. Like diabetes or heart disease, bipolar disorder is a long-term illness that must be carefully managed throughout a person's life.⁴

The International Society for Bipolar Disorders (ISBD) observed March 30, 2014 as the inaugural World Bipolar Day. The Asian Network of Bipolar Disorder (ANBD), the International Bipolar Foundation (IBPF), and the International Society for Bipolar Disorders (ISBD) came together to work on the concept in order to address the disparity in how bipolar disorder is viewed in different parts of the world. Studies show that, out of the 65% of the Puerto Rican population who receives mental health services, 5% suffers bipolar disorder.⁵

The purpose of this measure is to raise awareness of the different types of mental health conditions and express the commitment of this Legislative Assembly to mental health patients in Puerto Rico. Moreover, it seeks to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by persons with bipolar disorder, and help educate and inform the people of Puerto Rico about this condition and the available options for treatment. With this measure, Puerto Rico joins the global awareness effort regarding bipolar disorder, its implications in the behavior of individuals, and the consequences on our daily life. In seeking to prevent social stigma and stereotyping, as well as raising awareness of the condition, the government and communities are hereby encouraged to join efforts and March 30 is hereby designated as "Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day."

⁴ National Institute of Mental Health, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml>

⁵ Rosario, Plaza, et al. La salud mental en Puerto Rico: una mirada desde las estadísticas y la política pública. Cuadernos de investigación social y económica. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico. 2012.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- March 30 of each year is hereby designated as “Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day.”

Section 2.- At least ten (10) days before March 30, the Secretary of the Department of Health, in coordination with the Administrator of the Mental Health and Addiction Services Administration (ASSMCA), shall issue a proclamation to raise awareness and educate the Puerto Rican people about this medical condition.

Section 3.- The Secretary of the Department of State, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and the Administrator of the Mental Health and Addiction Services Administration (ASSMCA), and together with the public and municipal instrumentalities and entities of Puerto Rico, shall take measures as necessary to achieve the purposes of this Act. They may do so by organizing and holding activities to promote and observe March 30 as “Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day.” Furthermore, such activities shall show the importance of raising awareness of bipolar disorder among physicians, healthcare professionals, and the general public. Citizen and private entity participation in the activities held on that day shall be promoted.

Section 4.- A copy of the annual proclamation shall be distributed to the mass media for broadcasting.

Section 4.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following **Act No. 9-2016 (S. B. 988)** of the **7th Regular Session** of the **17th Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico**:

AN ACT to declare March 30 of each year as “Bipolar Disorder Awareness Day”; and for other purposes.

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, on this 14th day of July, 2016.

Juan Luis Martínez Martínez
Director