**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO SEEK TO DESTIGMATIZE SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER, SHARE REAL STORIES OF HOPE AND RECOVERY, AND INSPIRE LEXINGTON COUNTY RESIDENTS TO SEEK HELP AND SUPPORT BY CHOOSING #COURAGEOVERSTIGMA.

Whereas, substance use disorder is prevalent in South Carolina, and instances of opioid overdose increased for five years consecutively from 2014 through 2019; and

Whereas, fatal overdoses from opioids increased in Lexington County from 2018 to 2019 by more than forty‑eight percent; and

Whereas, the COVID‑19 pandemic has amplified the isolation, fear, stress, and grief experienced by those with substance use disorders and has increased barriers to treatment and recovery support; and

Whereas, The Courage Center seeks to raise awareness and decrease stigma related to addiction initially within six targeted overdose “hotspots” in Lexington County; and

Whereas, by collaborating with community members in Cayce, West Columbia, Gaston, Irmo, South Congaree, and Swansea, The Courage Center is working to educate residents that substance use disorders are a chronic brain disease and not moral failures or weaknesses; and

Whereas, stigma can reduce the willingness of individuals to seek treatment, and stereotyping can impact the care they receive; and

Whereas, The Courage Center provides a safe, judgement‑free space for those seeking resource navigation, peer‑recovery support, and evidence‑based programs specifically for adolescents and emerging adults ages fourteen to nineteen, who are harmfully engaged in substance use, and for their families; and

Whereas, more than one hundred twenty‑eight thousand residents of Lexington County will be reached through this campaign to reduce the stigma related to substance use disorder. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, seek to destigmatize substance use disorder, share real stories of hope and recovery, and inspire Lexington County residents to seek help and support by choosing #CourageOverStigma.

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