



Resolution 2024-02

2024 DECLARING LONELINESS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

A RESOLUTION DECLARING LONELINESS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS is intended to raise awareness about the impacts of loneliness and isolation on individual and societal health, decrease stigmas, and create visibility and support for community members across our District who are experiencing this reality. With this resolution, we declare that as a community we must do more to build meaningful and sustained opportunities for social connection, engagement, and support, all of which contribute to achieving optimal health.

WHEREAS, it is the mandate of the Peninsula Health Care Board of Directors to identify and address health needs of residents of the District; and

WHEREAS, the Peninsula Health Care District Board of Directors has made as its strategic priority to serve as a flexible and immediate responder during times of crisis such as during an emerging global health pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Peninsula Health Care District Board of Directors embraces inclusion and collaboration as core values and recognizes their pivotal role in improving the health of the community; and

WHEREAS, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murphy has issued, *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The Surgeon General Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community*, which highlights the public health crisis of loneliness, isolation, and lack of social connection, emphasizing the significant impact on mental, physical, and societal health; and

WHEREAS, loneliness is associated with a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, stroke, depression, anxiety, suicidality and self-harm, and premature death.

WHEREAS, the mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.

WHEREAS, studies find the highest level of loneliness and isolation are among people with poor physical or mental health, disabilities, financial insecurity, those who live alone, single parents, as well as younger and older populations. Other at-risk groups include: individuals from ethnic and racial minorities groups, LGBTQ+ individuals, victims of domestic violence, and those who experience discrimination and marginalization.

WHEREAS, in San Mateo County in 2022, 45% of residents expressed they were experiencing difficulty with isolation and loneliness.

WHEREAS, San Mateo County is the first County in the nation to declare loneliness a public health crisis and pledged to explore measures that promote social connection in the community through the passage of Board of Supervisors' resolution in January 2024; and

WHEREAS, the District's community programs support mental health and well-being, from allcove San Mateo youth drop-in center serving youth ages 12 to 25; The Trousdale – an assisted living facility in Burlingame with programming and onsite amenities to support our older adults; the Peninsula Health & Fitness Center offering fitness and wellness classes and a place for older adults to connect with their peers; and the Grants Portfolio that partners with community organizations serving residents across the life course through programs aimed at improving individual and community health and mental health; and

WHEREAS, organizations across the nation, including many community-based agencies and service providers in the District's region, are working to address socialization and connectedness with evidence-based and innovative solutions; and,

WHEREAS, an intensified emphasis on prevention and proactive strategies to mitigate the pervasive and far-reaching impacts of loneliness and isolation is absolutely critical, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly compounded an already troubling social phenomenon; and

WHEREAS, protecting public safety and well-being in the communities they serve is the Governing Board's highest responsibility; and

WHEREAS, we renew our commitment to reducing loneliness and isolation and pledge to do all we can to "connect communities" through education, prevention, advocacy, and safeguarding community access to basic health services.

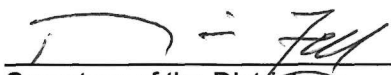
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Body of the Peninsula Health Care District thereof concurring, that the District hereby recognizes and declares Loneliness a Public Health Crisis and encourages stakeholders in our District, representing different sectors, to work together to address loneliness, isolation, and a lack of connection.

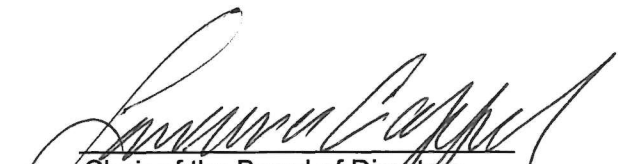
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the District shall continue to offer, develop, and support programs to combat loneliness affecting District residents, with special emphasis and concern for teens and young adults, seniors, and members of at-risk groups.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Peninsula Health Care District, County of San Mateo, State of California, duly held on the 25th day of April 2024, by the following vote:

AYES: 3
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT: 2

APPROVED:


Secretary of the District
Dennis Zell, Esq.


Chair of the Board of Directors
Lawrence W. Cappel, Ph.D.