

**Coalition of Labor Union Women
16th Biennial Convention
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WE NEED BOTH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Good mental health is important to overall health yet it is estimated that 1 in 4 adults have a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. Mental health disorders are real medical illnesses that interfere with one's ability to function at home, at work and in social settings.

Over 5 percent of adults have a serious mental illness. Serious mental disorders are as disabling as cancer or heart disease in terms of premature death and lost productivity. They are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for persons aged 15-44.

Women have higher rates of diagnosis for certain mental health conditions including depression, anxiety-related disorders and eating disorders. Traumatic life events and major life changes may trigger a mental illness.

Serious physical illnesses affect both the mind and the body. Women account for 90 percent of the cases of fibromyalgia, a chronic disease which often takes a toll on emotional well-being. It is a persistent and debilitating disorder which causes chronic pain ranging from mild to unbearable. Fibromyalgia and depression often co-exist.

An estimated 5.4 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease. According to the Alzheimer's Association, research shows that women are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia than men.

The Centers for Disease Control stated that research has improved our ability to recognize, diagnose and effectively treat mental illness. However, less than one-third of adults with mental disorders receive any mental health services in a given year. Racial and ethnic minorities have even less access to mental health services.

The health reform law signed by President Obama calls for coverage for mental health and substance abuse disorder services, depression screening as part of preventive health services, and grants for research and treatment for depression, postpartum conditions, and increased community-based mental and behavioral health care.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

CLUW recognizes that mental health disorders are medical conditions and will seek to lessen the stigma of mental illness through awareness and education at the chapter and national level. Health forums which include mental illness as well as physical illness and encourage healthy lifestyles are encouraged.

CLUW will advocate for implementation of improved mental health services as required in the 2010 health reform law and for parity for mental health treatment coverage as a basic health right.

National Alliance on Mental Illness: www.nami.org
National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov
National Fibromyalgia Association: www.fmaware.org 1-714-921-0150
Alzheimer's Association: alz.org/10signs 1-877-474-8259