
A RESOLUTION TO END THE LAWYERS' EPIDEMIC: DEPRESSION, SUICIDE, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

WHEREAS we acknowledge that lawyers are three times as likely to suffer from depression as any other profession;

WHEREAS we acknowledge that suicide is the third leading cause of death among lawyers;

WHEREAS we acknowledge that the rate of death by suicide for lawyers is nearly six times the suicide rate for the general population;

WHEREAS we acknowledge that lawyers are twice as likely to suffer from substance abuse as the general population;

WHEREAS the South Carolina Bar formed the HELP Task Force to raise awareness and promote prevention of substance abuse, mental illness, and suicide within the legal profession;

WHEREAS the South Carolina Bar's Lawyers Helping Lawyers program provides support and services to members of the legal profession in South Carolina who suffer from substance abuse or depression;

WHEREAS we recognize that raising awareness and promoting prevention of substance abuse, mental illness, and suicide within the legal profession will save lives and restore integrity to the profession;

WHEREAS we recognize that such awareness and prevention efforts will also protect the public from lawyers whose performance is impaired by these problems;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the South Carolina Bar is committed to the goal of bringing an end to the epidemic of depression, suicide, and substance abuse among lawyers, and therefore, supports the efforts of the HELP Task Force and Lawyers Helping Lawyers. We further encourage lawyers, judges, law students, law firms, corporate legal departments, legal service organizations, government offices, the court system, and related agencies, and all other employers of lawyers to support the goal of raising awareness and promoting the prevention of substance abuse, mental illness, and suicide. We encourage these organizations to work with the HELP Task Force and Lawyers Helping Lawyers to promote a better understanding of mental health issues in the legal profession.

Adopted by the House of Delegates on May 14, 2009.