



National Eating Disorders Association

National Eating Disorders Association
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Memo of Support

SB No.438: Eating Disorders Awareness Week

The National Eating Disorders Association urges immediate **support for Connecticut Bill SB No. 438**. This exciting legislation would officially declare every fourth week in February of each year to be Eating Disorders Awareness Week!

National Eating Disorders Awareness Week:

- The goal of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (#NEDAwareness) is to put the spotlight on eating disorders and improve public understanding of their causes, dangers and treatments.
- Millions of people across the country suffer from eating disorders, but by increasing awareness and access to resources, we can encourage early detection and intervention.
- Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental disorder, so the greater awareness there is around these illnesses, the greater the chance of saving lives.
- Connecting local communities around the nation with eating disorder resources and treatment information can decrease the likelihood of the onset of an eating disorder, sparing millions from the devastating impacts of these illnesses.

The prevalence of eating disorders is high:

- In American high schools, 30% of girls and 16% of boys suffer from disordered eating, including bingeing, vomiting, fasting, laxative and diet pill use and compulsive exercise.
- Anorexia is the third most common chronic illness among adolescents.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics has expressed concern about the increasing prevalence of eating disorders at progressively younger ages and called attention to a sharp rise in hospitalizations for eating disorders among children under 12 years old.

Eating disorders can have a devastating impact on an individual's health, potentially causing severe health consequences and even death:

- Disordered eating and dieting have been linked to serious risk-taking behaviors, such as drug, alcohol and tobacco use, delinquency, unprotected sexual activity, dating violence and suicide attempts.
- Eating disorders affect every organ system in the body, including cognition. If left untreated, they can damage the brain, liver, kidneys, GI tract, teeth, skin, hair, bones and heart. They can result in such serious medical conditions as retarded growth, osteoporosis, kidney problems, ulcers and heart failure.
- For females 15-24 years old who suffer from anorexia, the mortality rate associated with the illness is twelve times higher than the death rate of all other causes of death.

NEDA urges the support for this important initiative to improve the health and well-being of the countless individuals suffering with eating disorders in Connecticut.

