WHEREAS, Alcohol Awareness Month is a public health program organized by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence as a way of increasing outreach and education regarding the dangers of alcoholism and issues related to alcohol. The program was started in April of 1987; and

WHEREAS, The disease of addiction continues to devastate Rhode Island’s communities and remains a public health emergency that continues to pose a significant public health and safety threat to the State, costing hundreds of lives each year; and

WHEREAS, In addition to opioids and heroin, abuse of other dangerous substances, including alcohol, is on the rise, and the disease of addiction is not exclusive to any one substance; and

WHEREAS, Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a chronic brain disorder that is characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences and often goes untreated. The number of individuals affected by alcoholism and AUD during the COVID-19 pandemic has risen significantly, and the dangers of excessive alcohol use should not be ignored; and

WHEREAS, Alcohol use disorder affects every community and alcohol consumption is the third-leading cause of preventable death in the United States, according to research conducted in 2018; and

WHEREAS, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports...
that AUD was the most common substance use disorder among adults in the United States in 2018, affecting 14.25 million people; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reported that around 58,000 Rhode Island adults qualify as suffering from alcohol use disorder and 53,000 Rhode Island adults need, but are not receiving, AUD treatment at a specialty facility. That means that 91.38 percent of Rhode Island adults suffering from alcohol use disorder need, but are not receiving, AUD treatment; and

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report states that in Rhode Island there were approximately 339 alcohol attributable deaths each year and 27.6 years of life lost per alcohol-attributable death from 2011 to 2015; and

WHEREAS, Nationally, alcohol-related disorders are a leading cause of 7-day and 30-day hospital readmissions. In 2013, alcohol use and dependence was the number one reason for potentially preventable hospital readmission related to a substance use disorder initial admission in Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, Emergency department visits for alcohol-related diagnoses increased by 47 percent for both men and women from 2006-2014, and the costs for such visits increased from $4.1 billion to $15.3 billion in the same time period. In 2016, alcohol-related disorders were the tenth most common reason among all Rhode Islanders, for a visit to a Rhode Island emergency department. In 2014, alcohol abuse was eighth in reasons for potentially preventable emergency department visits in Rhode Island and it was second in those covered by Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, Alcohol use has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to RTI International, alcohol consumption, exceeding drinking guidelines, and binge drinking increased from February 2020 to November 2020. Specialists at hospitals across the country said rates of admissions for alcoholic liver disease have leapt by up to 50 percent since March 2020; and

WHEREAS, A 2021 article in the Journal of General Internal Medicine stated “the full impact of COVID-19 on alcohol use is not yet known. However, the current rise in drinking during the acute phase of the pandemic mandates a deliberate and clear public health and medical response and a multifaceted approach”; and

WHEREAS, Meeting people where they are in their recovery journey is a critical component of public health and every setting of care should be aware of the signs of dangerous alcohol use, trained in screening and assessing for, and treating, alcohol use disorder; and

WHEREAS, In December 2020, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Pub. L.
116-260) was enacted, which included $1.65 billion in supplemental SAPT Block Grant funding
provided as part of the law’s section dedicated to COVID-19 relief; and

WHEREAS, In March 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117-2) was
enacted, which included $1.5 billion in longer term supplemental SAPT Block Grant funding;
now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby commemorates April
6 of 2022, as “Alcohol Awareness Month” in the State of Rhode Island; and it be further
RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that the Governor of the State
of Rhode Island, the Honorable Daniel McKee, the Executive Office of Health and Human
Services, the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, the
Department of Corrections, and the Department of Health prioritize increasing public and
provider awareness of the health risks associated with dangerous alcohol consumption, the
consumption of alcohol with other substances, the risks of alcohol overdose, screening and
assessing for alcohol use disorder, and the availability of treatment for alcohol use disorder in
Rhode Island, including primary care, hospital, and criminal justice settings; and be it further
RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that the Governor of the State
of Rhode Island, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Department of
Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, the Department of Corrections,
and the Department of Health consider utilizing the supplemental SAPT Block Grant funding
provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan for these efforts;
and it be further
RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Daniel McKee, Governor of the
State of Rhode Island, the Secretary of the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human
Services, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental
Disabilities and Hospitals, the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, and the
Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health.