

**A PROCLAMATION
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH and
STIGMA FREE DAY**

WHEREAS, today, tens of millions of Americans are living with the burden of a mental health problem. They shoulder conditions like depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress and bipolar disorder -- debilitating illnesses that can strain every part of a person's life; and

WHEREAS, even though help is out there, less than half of children and adults with diagnosable mental health problems receive treatment. During National Mental Health Awareness Month, we shine a light on these issues, stand with men, women and children in need, and redouble our efforts to address mental health problems in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, for many, getting help starts with a conversation. People who believe they may be suffering from a mental health condition should talk about it with someone they trust and consult a health care provider; and

WHEREAS, as a community, it is up to all of us to know the signs of mental health issues and lend a hand to those who are struggling. Shame and stigma too often leave people feeling like there is no place to turn. We need to make sure they know that asking for help is not a sign of weakness -- it is a sign of strength; and

WHEREAS, we must ensure people have access to the care they need -- which is why my Administration will keep building on those achievements. I am proud to be the first community in Bergen County to launch the Paramus Stigma Free Zone, a new partnership between Government, Public Schools, Private Schools, Mental Health Providers, Mental Health advocates, Law enforcement and Concerned citizens in an effort to remove the stigma attached to mental health and create a dialogue, to get people talking it and not feel ashamed to be talking about it; and

WHEREAS, five years ago on May 23rd, 2013 the Borough of Paramus was the first municipality in the County of Bergen and second in the State of New Jersey to declare itself Stigma Free and establish a Stigma Free Task Force; and

WHEREAS, to date, all municipalities in the County of Bergen have taken the lead of Paramus and they too have all declared themselves Stigma- Free; and

WHEREAS, May 23rd shall be known as "Stigma Free Day" in the Borough of Paramus and all persons shall wear lime green in the Borough of Paramus in recognition and celebration of "Stigma Free Day"; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Richard LaBarbiera, Mayor of the Borough of Paramus do hereby proclaim May 2018 as National Mental Health Awareness Month and May 23rd, Stigma Free Day in the Borough of Paramus. I call upon citizens, government agencies, organizations, health care providers, and research institutions to raise mental health awareness and continue helping Americans live longer, healthier lives.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty third day of May in the year two thousand seventeen and caused the seal of the Borough of Paramus to be affixed.



Mayor Richard A. LaBarbiera

Attest: Annemarie Krusznis, Borough Clerk