



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, mental health is essential to a person's life and well-being and affects physical health, relationships, and the ability to thrive; and

WHEREAS, activities such as exercise, mindfulness strategies, social connections, 'unplugging' from news and social media, pursuing a hobby, spending time in nature, and self-care may support mental health; and

WHEREAS, integrating physical and behavioral healthcare is effective and increases access to care, and it is critical for individuals with serious mental illness who die on average 10-20 years earlier than the general population; and

WHEREAS, one in five United States adults will experience a mental illness in any given year, and one in five children, ages 3-17, will have a seriously debilitating mental illness at some point in their lives, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

WHEREAS, rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions have risen, significantly increasing the need for holistic and specific mental health services that are accessible to all, according to the National Institute of Mental Health; and

WHEREAS, a greater understanding from emerging science and research on toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences has informed an understanding of the worsening mental health and suicide rates of youth, affirming that a multi-faceted and swift response is needed to address this growing public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey has successfully built and continues to expand its robust array of effective, responsive, integrated behavioral health services and support for children, youth, and adults, and recognizes the need for opportunities that allow them to heal from trauma; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey is committed to providing children and adults with mental illness access to a behavioral health system that offers comprehensive, evidence-based, integrated, coordinated, person-centered treatment services and supports that are trauma-responsive, competently, and compassionately delivered; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey has implemented 9-8-8, the national three-digit dialing code for anyone having thoughts of suicide or experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey is making great strides in reducing discrimination associated with a mental health diagnosis by instilling hope and by providing access to behavioral healthcare and to a wide array of community-based, human, and social services that assist individuals with mental illness to live a dignified life with the supports and services they need to thrive;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mikie Sherrill, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

MAY 2026

AS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

in New Jersey.



GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this ninth day of April in the year two thousand twenty-six, the two hundred fiftieth year of the Independence of the United States.

Dele G. Colwell
Lt. GOVERNOR

Mikie Sherrill
GOVERNOR