



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, during Suicide Prevention Month we join to observe today, September 10th, as World Suicide Prevention Day and, in the midst of a global pandemic that has come with great loss, hardship, and increased social isolation, New York State supports initiatives that raise awareness of suicide and its increasing incidence, and that promote every means for its prevention; and

Whereas, each suicide attempt or death by suicide is not just a troubling statistic but a tragedy that is felt by individuals, families, and communities and, as New Yorkers are united in supporting one another during the COVID-19 pandemic, we must also continue to care for each other's physical and mental health; and

Whereas, in 2019, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline received more than 137,000 calls from New Yorkers – inclusive of our state's Veterans' community as well as the Spanish-speaking population – and, among the non-Veteran, non-Spanish language calls received by Lifeline-affiliated centers within the state, there was an increase of 73 percent from 2016 to 2019; and

Whereas, between March and May of 2020, the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York State, the Crisis Text Line received more than 15,000 texts from New Yorkers, an increase of more than 50 percent from the same period in 2019; and

Whereas, the number of Americans reporting serious mental distress during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased significantly and, as the early epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, New York State has suffered unimaginable losses as well as disquieting levels of stress and anxiety brought to the lives of people of all ages, races, religions, and economic backgrounds; it is more important than ever to instill hope and let people know they are not alone, and that mental health support is available; and

Whereas, to help New Yorkers who are experiencing increased anxiety, stress, depression, and isolation due to this health emergency, our state established a COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline that connects people in need with mental health professional volunteers who answer questions, provide support, consultation, and referrals; the state has also partnered with Headspace, a global leader in mindfulness and meditation, to provide support from mental health professionals volunteering their time to connect with people by FaceTime or by telephone, and offer free meditation and mindfulness content; and

Whereas, the New York State Office of Mental Health's Suicide Prevention Office is committed to promoting and advancing evidence-based and comprehensive suicide prevention in healthcare, schools, and communities across the State; and

Whereas, since 2019, New York State has provided more than 32,000 suicide-specific trainings to community members, healthcare providers, school staff, and students; COVID-19 created the need for additional trainings on coping during the pandemic, including webinars on telehealth and gatekeeper trainings for Contact Tracers and NYC EMS workers; and

Whereas, reducing the stigma of suicide by discussing it openly and increasing the awareness of available resources encourages help-seeking behaviors and helps suicide attempt survivors and survivors of suicide loss to heal and recover; and

Whereas, Suicide Prevention Month and World Suicide Prevention Day provide the opportunity to raise awareness of the problem of suicide, educate ourselves about potential warning signs, and how best to help those most in need; New York State joins in support of these important goals, offering resources for the prevention of suicide, stressing the importance of addressing mental health, and raising awareness of mental health issues, as we solemnly remember those lost to suicide and share a common hope for moving forward to recovery from COVID-19 for us all;

Now. Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2020 as

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this first day of September in the year two thousand twenty.

Governor

Secretary to the Governor
Melissa DeRosa