

**Middlesex County Office of Human Services
&
Mental Health Board
Proclamation ~ 2018**

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health has concluded that mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being;

WHEREAS, for more than 50 years, Mental Health America has proclaimed May as, "Mental Health Awareness Month", to raise awareness about mental health, combat the social stigma & discrimination associated with mental illness that often prevents people from seeking help, promote a message of hope and recovery, and celebrate consumer strength and resilience;

WHEREAS, people with mental illness & addiction recover if given the necessary supports & services in the community, yet many avoid seeking help due to stigma and the fear of discrimination;

WHEREAS, Middlesex County recognizes the stigma associated with mental illness & addiction and acknowledges that many people may remain unserved because of the stigma of seeking help. This month we call attention to this so we can bring mental illness and addiction out of the shadows and encourage treatment and support. We acknowledge that greater public awareness about mental health & addiction recovery can change negative attitudes and behaviors;

WHEREAS, Middlesex County stands with those impacted by behavioral health challenges and pledges to increase awareness and greater understanding of these conditions. We will work to reduce stigma and discrimination, and increase appropriate, accessible supports and services. We will strive to promote a message of hope and the belief that healing and recovery are attainable;

Now, **THEREFORE**, I, Ronald G. Rios, on behalf of the County of Middlesex, do hereby proclaim the month of May, 2018 as Mental Health Awareness Month and call upon all citizens to participate in efforts to increase awareness and better understanding of mental illness & addiction, and work towards eliminating stigma in Middlesex County!