

# Proclamation

## Office of the Mayor

### Mental Health Awareness Month

**WHEREAS**, the Bergen County Executive and the Board of Commissioners, along with the Bergen County Department of Health Services, supports the designation of Stigma-Free Zones in every municipality, and;

**WHEREAS**, at the June 2013 meeting of the Bergen County Mental Health Board, members of the Board learned from Care Plus NJ staff that the agency was working collaboratively to establish a Stigma Free Zone in Paramus, and;

**WHEREAS**, the members of the Mental Health Board supported the initiative and recognized that the initiative was aligned with the Board's mission to raise awareness of the disease of mental illness, and;

**WHEREAS**, the National Institute of Mental Health reports that 1 in 4 adults experiences mental illness in a given year and 1 in 17 adults live with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, major depression, or bipolar disorder; approximately 20% of youth ages 13 to 18 and 13% of youth ages 8 to 15 experience severe mental disorders in a given year, and;

**WHEREAS**, the stigma associated with the disease of mental illness is identified as the primary reason individuals fail to seek the help they need to recover from the disease, and;

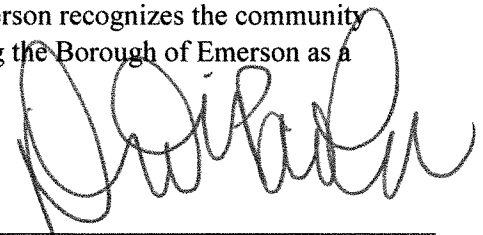
**WHEREAS**, Stigma-Free Zones aim to inspire public interest and open dialogues about stigma, raise awareness of the disease of mental illness and create a culture wherein residents who have the disease of mental illness feel supported by their community and neighbors and feel free to seek treatment for the disease without fear of stigma and;

**WHEREAS**, promoting awareness that there can be no "health" without mental health will break down barriers and encourage residents of all ages to be mindful of their mental health and ask for help when needed, and;

**WHEREAS**, local resources are available to treat the disease of mental illness so no one resident needs to suffer alone or feel hopeless, and;

**WHEREAS**, establishing Stigma-Free Zones will raise awareness of resources and encourage residents to engage in care as soon as the need is identified so recovery can begin, hope is inspired and tragedies are avoided, and;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Borough of Emerson recognizes the community needs and supports the efforts of the County of Bergen in designating the Borough of Emerson as a Stigma-Free Zone.



**Danielle DiPaola, Mayor**  
May 6, 2025