

To: San Mateo County Commission on the Status of Women

From: S. Datta and C. Fama, Co-chairs, Mental Health Work Group

Date: April 23, 2021

Subject: Mental Health Work Group

Update: Mental Health

- **May is Mental Health Month – Theme for 2021: “Hope for Change”**
 - ***Opportunity:*** There is a role for the CSW to partner with the County’s BHRS in raising awareness of how prevalent behavioral wellness and mental health issues are across all ages of women, youth and girls, and carry out the CSW plan to advocate for and promote the programs and resources of the County and community provider partners with a focus on the special programs planned for this month.
 - ***County BHRS staff we met with to identify CSW opportunities:***
 - Scott Gilman, Director of BHRS
 - Sylvia Tang, Head of Planning committee for MH Month
 - Claudia Saggese, Director of Consumer & Family Affairs, and leader of the Lived Experience Education Workgroup (LEEW)
 - Also attended the MH Month Planning Committee on 4/22 to participate in Community Outreach Planning.
 - ***Results/Opportunities:***
 - Develop talking points/messages for Commissioner use.
 - Offer public comments at BOS May 4th meeting when MH Month is recognized.
 - Offer public comments at each city council during May.
 - Actively promote the BHRS’s events through CSW and Commissioner social media.
 - Subgroup to gather and distribute flyers and links to other free provider programs on mental health. These examples are presented in English and Spanish:
 - Angst: Raising Awareness Around Anxiety*
<https://angst2021smoe.eventbrite.com>
 - Reducing COVID Stress and Anxiety for Parents*
<https://missionbe2021sequoia.eventbrite.com>

- Follow up on LEEW's interest, as shared by Ms. Saggese, in participating in a round table with a group of Commissioners to share their experiences and help inform the CSW Subgroup as it carries out its work plan.
- Wear lime green when presenting public comments – that is the MH Month color this year.

Resources:

[May is Mental Health Month Website](#)

[Proclamation by San Mateo County Cities](#)

Proposed Actions for the CSW:

- **Invite CSW Members to attend their City Council meetings when their mental health proclamations are schedule and make public comment. Here are call to action items and talking points for Mental Health Month (MHM):**

Why MHM?

o Mental health and substance use conditions affects 1 in 4 adults in the US in 2019; estimates suggest that one in four adults with a mental health condition are not receiving the help they need; and

o Communities have faced increasing mental health challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The percentage of adults who had symptoms of an anxiety or a depressive disorder and those with unmet mental health needs increased significantly (from 36.4% to 41.5% and 9.2% to 11.7% respectively) during August 2020 to February 2021

o Stigma and lack of awareness of resources are some of the key barriers preventing people from getting help around mental health and substance use issues

o MHM is one of the best times of the year to increase awareness and inspire action to reduce stigma against those facing mental health and substance use issues

2. What is MHM?

o San Mateo County joins our state and country in celebrating Mental Health Month (MHM) in May.

- o Key ways we promote MHM is through a communication campaign and events
- o Lime green is the national color for mental health and represents how we want to bring a bright light to an important issue that may be hidden or seen negatively

3. 2021 MHM Theme

- o This year's theme, aligned with the statewide theme, is #HopeForChange.
- o The past year has undoubtedly brought unanticipated changes for us as individuals, families, and communities—leaving us to face these challenges and transform.
- o Change is not always planned. Growth can be powerful and empowering. It can also be uncomfortable.
- o #HopeForChange reminds us to spread and rely on the hope that carried us through a year of change.

4. 2021 MHM Virtual Events

- o San Mateo County MHM Planning Committee and partners have organized almost 50 virtual events that feature open mic, music, art, films, pets, children stories, speaker panels and more!
- o Events will target a range of age groups and will be largely be in English and Spanish (while some events are in additional languages or interpretation can be provided in additional languages)
- o All events are free and open to the public but space but is limited; please register to save your spot.

5. Information/Resources

- o www.smchealth.org/mentalhealthmonth - includes event information and registration
- o <https://www.smchealth.org/covid-19-mental-health> - COVID-19 - mental health resources

6. Call to Action

- o Attend and share one or more MHM event (promo flyer on next page)
- o Wear lime green or something green when making your public comment
- o Talk openly about mental health with others