

# Hillsborough Township

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## News Release

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### **Hillsborough Township’s Mayors Wellness Campaign Again Collaborates With BoroSafe and the Hillsborough - Millstone Municipal Alliance for “Mindful May.”**

At the May 9th Township Committee meeting, Mayor Shawn Lipani and the Hillsborough Township Committee presented a proclamation recognizing May as Mental Health Awareness Month. The recognition is part of “Mindful May”, a collaboration between the Township Committee, the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign, the Hillsborough- Millstone Municipal Alliance, and BoroSafe.

In October 2020, Hillsborough was designated a “Stigma-Free Community,”. The Stigma-Free initiative strives to help raise awareness surrounding mental health while creating an environment where individuals feel free to seek support to enhance their mental health, without fear of being stigmatized.

“Thank you to the many volunteers from BoroSafe, the Municipal Alliance and the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign for all they do to bring about awareness, prevention, programs, and education for our community. The ongoing collaboration between the Township and all of these entities aid in the continuation of raising awareness of mental health and wellness for our community while working to reduce the stigma, so individuals can feel comfortable in seeking services and support”, stated Mayor Shawn Lipani.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in 5 people in any given year are living with a diagnosable mental health condition. Moreover, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), approximately 23 million Americans have a substance abuse disorder with only 25% receiving treatment. Despite these staggering numbers, there remains a high rate of shame associated with mental health treatment, education, substance use, overdose, and suicide.

Mindful May kicked off with Puppy Yoga which took place at the end of April. There is nothing better than cute puppies and a great yoga class to help calm our minds. The Board of Education and the Township Committee both proclaimed May National Mental Health Awareness Month at recent meetings. Additionally, the Hope for Tomorrow Mental Health and Wellness Fair will take place on Friday, May 12th, and features resources, vendors, games, music, and other activities meant to raise awareness. The ANGST Documentary which highlights real stories about mental health, hope and resilience will be available virtually on Thursday, May 25th.

Please check the Hillsborough Township website, Mayor's eNewsletter, BoroSafe.org, and social media accounts to learn about upcoming events from the collaborating organizations.

**Stigma-Free:** The Stigma-Free Campaign is an initiative of the Somerset County Department of Human Services to raise awareness about the tangible impact that mental health stigma has on the community. Stigma, the practice of associating negative stereotypes with certain conditions like substance use, race, or social class, creates barriers and challenges that could be eliminated.

**BoroSafe:** BoroSAFE is a community collaborative with an aim to provide access to mental health resources, emotional well-being best practices, and suicide prevention resources across the entire Hillsborough Community.

**The Mayor's Wellness Campaign:** The Mayors Wellness Campaign (MWC) is a statewide community health initiative that provides evidence-based tools and strategies for mayors and community leaders to help their residents achieve healthier lifestyles and to improve overall health and wellness in their communities. The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute has been leading the Mayors Wellness Campaign in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities since 2006. The campaign includes over 400 participating communities and is growing.

**The Hillsborough-Millstone Municipal Alliance:** The Hillsborough-Millstone Municipal Alliance envisions having our local community understand that alcoholism and drug addictions are chronic conditions that can be successfully prevented and treated, and to create an environment that promotes and protects the mental, social, and physical health of the community members.

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