

BY: M. of A. Cunningham

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim
May 2024 as Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month
in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months that are set aside to increase awareness of serious health conditions that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2024 as Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month in the State of New York, coinciding with the observance of World Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, The maternal health and, more specifically, the mental health of women before, during, and after pregnancy is an issue of great concern to women and their families; one out of every five mothers in New York State will experience a perinatal mood and anxiety disorder which is the number one medical complication of pregnancy and childbirth; each year, in New York State, there are more than 100,000 mothers, fathers, and families affected; and

WHEREAS, Between 10 and 20 percent of new and expectant mothers are affected by perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis; they may also experience associated symptoms which are often overlooked and heavily stigmatized because new and expectant mothers suffering from perinatal mood disorders often feel confused, ashamed, and isolated; and

WHEREAS, Many at-risk women may not seek help because they are not informed about perinatal depression and related mood disorders, as part of their healthcare options, due to a lack of knowledge and use of screening and assessment tools; they are unaware of treatment and community supportive services for these mental health issues; and

WHEREAS, Heightened awareness and increased education among all residents of the State of New York, regarding the incidence of perinatal depression, is critical; less than 20 percent of pregnant and postpartum women are assessed for mental health concerns, and only half of those who are positive for these disorders receive care; and

WHEREAS, Perinatal depression and associated mood disorders affect all categories of women and teenage girls, regardless of their age, race, or income level; this condition can have a profound impact on their families and significantly contribute to adverse developmental and behavioral outcomes, as well as attachment disorders, in the children of affected women; and

WHEREAS, An alarming statistic related to these mental health issues

is maternal mortality; in the United States, this figure is double the number of deaths of most other developed countries; a majority of suicide or overdose deaths are caused by a lack of behavioral healthcare; these disorders are highly treatable with therapeutic intervention such as medication, professional therapy and counseling, and community support services, including crisis hotlines; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater awareness of this serious health condition, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, state, and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 2024 as Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.