

BY: Senator CARLUCCI

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim
May 20, 2020, as Older Adult Mental Health Awareness
Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, it is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness of serious illnesses 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 Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 20, 2020, as Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS, National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day will be celebrated each year on a designated date in May, which is both National Older Americans Month and National Mental Health Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, The vision of National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day is to bring awareness to mental illnesses in older adults, promote emotional well-being, and eliminate social stigma; through national collaboration, the goal of National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day is to bring the nation population information about older adult mental illness that will educate about and improve sensitivity towards these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Mental illnesses are disorders that represent significant challenges to patients, health care workers, family members, caregivers and our communities; and

WHEREAS, While growing acceptance of mental illnesses as medical conditions, like diabetes and heart disease, has taken hold in some parts of the nation, unfortunately the stigma associated with mental illnesses is a barrier to care and continues to impede early diagnosis and effective treatment; and

WHEREAS, Mental illnesses have historically been misunderstood, feared and therefore stigmatized, especially among older adults; the stigma is due to a lack of education, lack of appropriate information or proliferation of false information, ignorance, or ageism; and

WHEREAS, Its effects are especially painful and damaging to one's self-esteem; it leaves older adults with mental illnesses feeling like outcasts from society and a burden to their caregivers; and

WHEREAS, Whether the perceived stigma is real, it is the subjective interpretation that affects the older adult's feelings of belonging; and

WHEREAS, Like most groups who are stigmatized, there are many myths

surrounding mental illnesses, as well as myths about older adults living with mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, In order to address the disparity in how mental illnesses among older adults are viewed in different parts of the nation, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging (NCMHA), and the Association for Community Living (ACL), worked on the concept of a national older adult mental health awareness day; and

WHEREAS, In order to address the disparity on how mental illnesses among older adults is viewed statewide, the Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York (GMHA) worked on the concept of an older adult mental health awareness day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Older adults who live with mental illnesses are encouraged to remember that they can lead meaningful, emotionally healthy, and vibrant lives even though have been diagnosed with a mental illness; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater awareness of these serious health conditions, 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 Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 20, 2020, as Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York; and the Geriatric Mental Health Alliance of New York (GMHA).