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Official News Release

For Immediate Release

CHATHAM BOROUGH JOINS MORRIS COUNTY
“STIGMA FREE” MOVEMENT
19TH TOWN ENROLLED IN EFFORT TO END STIGMA
RELATED TO MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
DISORDERS



The Chatham Borough Council has voted to join the Morris County “Stigma Free” initiative, passing a resolution to make Chatham the 19th town in Morris County to join the countywide effort to help eradicate the stigma associated with mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

Chatham Borough joins recently announced participants, Mendham Borough, Mountain Lakes, Roxbury, and Washington Township as Stigma Free communities in Morris County.

Other participants are the town of Boonton, Boonton Township, Denville, Dover, East Hanover, Hanover, Jefferson, Long Hill, Madison, Morris Plains, Morris Township, Parsippany, Rockaway Borough and Rockaway Township

In addition, the Montville Public Schools recently became the first K-12 District in Morris County to enroll in the initiative, and Sparta in Sussex County also has been the first Sussex County town to do so.

“It is critical that we raise awareness and promote the available resources for a mission to assist those challenged by this illness. Indeed, I am proud to add Chatham Borough to the list of communities who embrace the Stigma-Free movement,” said **Chatham Borough Mayor Bruce Harris**.

We are really heartened by the support shown for this Stigma-Free initiative by towns, like Chatham Borough, and so many health providers and agencies, and our county residents,” said **Morris County Freeholder Director Doug Cabana**. “This initiative is an important step in helping affected people seek recovery, without fear of stigma or reprisal.”

The **Morris County Board of Freeholders** in 2016 passed a [resolution](#) designating Morris County as a Stigma-Free County and asked the county’s 39 towns to consider enrolling.

Morris County has created a Stigma Free website www.morriscountystigmafree.org to call attention to the initiative, provide information and resources, and a calendar of upcoming events related to mental illness and substance abuse. A Stigma Free Toolkit also is available for towns and communities. Also, check the Stigma Free news and calendar site at <https://morriscountystigmafree.org/news/>

MORRIS COUNTY PROUD TO BE STIGMA-FREE

Morris County’s goal in creating a Stigma Free initiative is to disseminate information and foster a stigma-free environment where people are free from judgment and can get the help they need to recover.

Here are some other voices supporting the initiative:

Mendham Mayor Neil Henry: “We’ve all been affected by mental illness in some way and becoming Stigma-Free is the first step in fighting this disease as a community. Only by removing the perception of shame or embarrassment will we

erase those feelings that prevent our neighbors, friends and family members from seeking help.

Washington Township Police Chief Jeff Almer: “With this program, we can continue to teach people about mental illness and substance abuse disorders, and erase the stigma attached to them. “This will make residents, as well as the police officers, more aware of the illnesses and work to create an environment where we can assist with wellness and recovery by providing needed support and resources.”

Roxbury Mayor Mark Crowley: “The Stigma Free Initiative is so important because it stresses that we become socially responsible for positive efforts to end discrimination of mental health and substance abuse disorders.”

As part of the countywide initiative, residents are urged to take the Stigma Free Pledge:

- As a supporter to those who have a mental illness or substance use disorder, I understand the importance of recognizing the high prevalence of mental illness and substance use disorders.
- I also know that when recognition is coupled with reeducation and understanding, health-seeking action can be taken. These actions lead to recovery, which is possible for everyone.
- The Three R’s (recognize, reeducate and reduce) depend on each other to effectively Stamp Out Stigma surrounding mental illness and substance use disorders.
- This is what I, as an individual, charge myself to do—to fully Stamp Out Stigma and clear the path to health-seeking behavior. It begins with me.

For information on the county’s Stigma Free movement, visit: <https://morriscountystigmafree.org/>

For more information on the disease of mental illness, visit www.nami.org and for more information on NAMI’s national Stigma Free effort, visit: <https://www.nami.org/stigmafree>

Stigma is defined as a mark of disgrace which results from the judgment by others. When an individual is labeled by their illness they experience judgment and prejudice. Stigma brings experiences and feelings of shame, embarrassment, distress, hopelessness and reluctance to seek or accept help.