

SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLONE ANNOUNCES MAY IS "PERINATAL MOOD AND ANXIETY DISORDERS AWARENESS MONTH" IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

County to Host Free Two-Part Virtual Event for Residents

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone today announced the dedication of May as Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Awareness Month. As part of the awareness campaign, Suffolk County residents are invited to a Free Two-Part Virtual Event on Wednesday, May 26 and Thursday, May 27, 2021 from 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM.

The free virtual program is hosted by the Suffolk County Executive's Office of Women's Services, Postpartum Resource Center of New York Inc, and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services – Maternal and Infant Health Community Health Collaborative (MICHC).

"Since 2009 Suffolk County has recognized May as 'Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder Awareness Month' in an effort to better educate the public on Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders, including postpartum depression which is a serious illness that not only affects mothers, but has lasting impacts on the child and other family members as well," said County Executive Bellone. "This May we will be working to increase awareness, education and sharing resources across the County to ensure everyone is educated and receives the support they need."

Speakers will include:

- County Executive Steve Bellone
- Grace Ioannidis, Director of Women's Services
- Gregson H. Pigott, Suffolk County Commissioner of Health Services
- Sonia Murdock, Executive Director and Co-founder, Postpartum Resource Center of New York
- Khadijah Hines, Founder, The Healing Space
- Jill Olish, Founder, Mama Outspoken
- Michelle Button, LCSW-R, PMH-C, Founder and Clinical Director, Passages Wellness and Counseling for Women
- Ellen Higgins, LCSW, Program Director, Maternal and Infant Health Community Health Collaborative (MICHC)
- Sharon Oliver-Murthy, MPA, MSc, RND, CDN, Nutritionist II/WIC Program Director

The May 26 webinar will discuss Pregnancy and Postpartum Depression, along with addressing maternal mental health and how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Suffolk County moms, babies, families and communities.

The May 27 webinar will be presented by Sonia Murdock, PMH-C, Executive Director and Co-founder, Postpartum Resource Center of New York. Free CEU Credit will be available to the first 25 eligible registrants of NYS Licensed Social Workers and NYS Licensed Mental Health Counselors. Event Sponsor Fidelis Care is covering the cost of the CEU credits.

"Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders are the most common medical complication related to childbearing," said Sonia Murdock, Co-founder and Executive Director of the Postpartum Resource Center of New York Inc. "It is critical for Suffolk County families and the community to be aware of this illness. It is important to become part of the safety net and know how to support those in need since pregnancy and postpartum depression/anxiety will affect 4,000 parents in Suffolk County this year."

"We are pleased to host this annual event now virtually with a focus on increasing awareness of Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders for the mother, father, family members, faith based communities, health professional and public servants," said Grace Ioannidis, Director of Women's Services for Suffolk County.

In addition to the virtual seminars, free Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Screenings (available in English and Spanish), care coordination and on-going support will be provided by Mammha, in coordination with the Postpartum Resource Center of New York, from 8:00 AM – 7:00 PM every day from now until June 15. Suffolk County birthing persons, moms to be and mothers may Text MOM PRCNY1 to 321-517-4278.

On May 22, the 13th Annual Sounds of Silence 5K/10K Run, Walk, Stroller-walk will be hosted by the Postpartum Resource Center of New York in Brightwaters, NY and virtually to break the silence for pregnancy and postpartum depression/anxiety awareness.

The upcoming events, free to the public, focus on increasing awareness throughout the county for mothers, fathers, family members, faith based communities, health care providers, mental health professions and public servants.

Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders, better known as postpartum depression, affects 1 in 5 women during pregnancy and/or after the birth of a child. Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders affect not only the mother experiencing these symptoms, but also the newborn and other members of the family.

For event information and zoom link, as well as additional resources, residents can contact the Suffolk County Office of Women's Services helpline at (631) 853-8222, Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. E-mail: grace.ioannidis@suffolkcountyny.gov