

**PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS**, mental health is paramount to an individual’s overall health and well-being; and each American faces challenges in daily life that can impact their mental health; and whether as a nation, city, business, or school – we all share the responsibilities and burdens resultant from unaddressed mental health issues, but in collaborative and compassionate efforts, recovery from such challenges and difficulties is possible; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Institute of Mental Health states that more than one in five U.S. adults live with a mental illness (51.5 million in 2019); and among these illnesses are: depression, addiction and post-traumatic stress disorder,

**WHEREAS**, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, nearly half of people with a substance use disorder also experience serious mental illness; and substance abuse costs Americans over \$600 billion annually, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. and

**WHEREAS**, as the U.S. enters month 15 of living with the ongoing painful impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, 40% of adults reported struggling with mental health issues or substance use in late-June of 2020 as cited by the CDC; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Alexandria has resources and professionals who work around-the-clock to address the mental health needs of Alexandrians, particularly in response to the compounded mental, physical, and economic strains brought to all citizens by COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the City provides critical information through its COVID-19 website ([alexandriava.gov/Coronavirus](http://alexandriava.gov/Coronavirus)) to inform and assist all Alexandrians in multiple languages, to effectively communicate safety net services and lifesaving facts; and established the Alexandria COVID-19 Hotline (703-746-4988) to ensure that voice-to-voice communication is established for those in need; and

**WHEREAS**, disparities exist in regard to mental health care services and black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) often receive poorer quality of care and lack access to culturally competent care and adults living with serious mental illness die on average 25 years earlier than others; and

**WHEREAS**, compared with Whites, BIPOC and immigrant communities are less likely to receive guideline-consistent care, less frequently included in research and more likely to use emergency rooms or primary care (rather than mental health specialists); and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Alexandria, along with the Virginia Department of Health and other organizations, encourages all residents in our City and beyond to reach out to organizations to address mental health in this pandemic:

**Alexandria Resources:**

EMERGENCY SERVICES: 703.746.3401 (24/7)

ADULT INTAKE: 703.746.3535

OPIOID TREATMENT PROGRAM: 703.746.3610

**State and National Resources:**

Virginia Department of Health Hotline: 877-ASK-VDH3 (877-275-8343)

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, JUSTIN M. WILSON**, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and on behalf of the Alexandria City Council, do hereby recognize the month of May, 2021, as:

**“MENTAL HEALTH MONTH”**

In the City of Alexandria and I call this observance to the attention of all our residents.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Alexandria to be affixed this 27<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021.

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**MAYOR JUSTIN M. WILSON**

On behalf of the City Council  
of Alexandria, Virginia

ATTEST:

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Gloria A. Sitton, CMC City Clerk