



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON, Ph.D.
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

To: DMHAS Staff
From: Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.
Date: May 6, 2020
Subject: DMHAS COVID-19 Staff Update #16

Over the past several months, DMHAS and our provider community have been touched in many ways by the coronavirus. We have all struggled with our new reality, maintaining social distancing while increasing healthy practices like handwashing. As the weather has improved our “quarantine fatigue” may be growing as we long for more carefree days when we were free to travel about. During this time, we have had patients, staff, and family members who have tested positive for COVID-19. And saddest of all, the DMHAS system has been forced to deal with patients and staff who have died. Some of you may have suffered the tragic loss of a family member or loved one. Just last week, I had to announce the death of a person who had been in one of our inpatient facilities. We see with this virus that none of us are immune to the devastation of coronavirus.

As we are forced to come to grips with death and loss on a scale we had never anticipated, I am reminded of the humans behind the statistics. Each life that is lost had a unique story to tell. They were somebody’s son or daughter, a brother or sister, a spouse, an uncle or aunt, a friend. They may have lived a long, full life or their best days may still have been ahead of them. When we are seeing so much death we may become numb and forget the human side of those we are losing. It is important to honor their memories and celebrate the uniqueness of the lives we have lost. This is especially important when the typical ways we grieve like wakes, funerals, or memorials are unable to be held. We must find ways to reach out to each other so we can continue to provide comfort and support as we deal with loss on so many levels.

It seems that one way to honor the memories of those we have lost is through acts of kindness and gestures of support. I have been heartened by the good news stories where people are finding ways to make a difference in spite of the challenges the virus puts in front of us. Whether it is volunteering to make masks, delivering food to the elderly, or checking in on neighbors, there are so many ways, small and large, that allow us to show our humanity. When I focus on these stories, it gives me hope that we will make it through this together.

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I have witnessed tragedy in our system and I have also seen hopeful signs in the work we do. The Governor's updates continue to show that we are making a difference as we work to beat the virus. You all continue to have a significant impact on the lives of the individuals we serve. Our dedication to the clients we serve is a way to honor the memories of those who have died during this outbreak. We can honor their lives as we continue to move forward. For those of you who have lost a loved one to coronavirus, may the memories you have about their life give you some comfort and solace. Thank you for all you have done and are continuing to do during these extraordinarily challenging times. .