



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**No. 191 – May 4, 2020**

**For more information contact:**  
[Lynn Sutfin](#)  
517-241-2112

## **Observance of Mental Health Month Has Added Significance During COVID-19 Crisis**

*Resources available at Stay Home, Stay Well website*

**LANSING, MICH.** The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) stands with mental health advocates and organizations in recognizing May as Mental Health Month. Observed nationally since 1949 and traditionally symbolized by a green ribbon, the mental health awareness effort sets a goal to combat stigma and provide support and education on matters pertaining to mental illness. It also aims to draw attention to suicide, which can be brought on by mental illness, in the hopes of further development of suicide prevention strategies.

During the COVID-19 crisis, mental health is increasingly becoming a focus of attention. In response, information about available mental health resources can be found through the state's [Stay Home, Stay Well initiative](#). These efforts are to help build resilience in Michigan residents trying to cope emotionally with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and include links to crisis help lines, guidance documents, videos and other mental health resources at [Michigan.gov/StayWell](#).

Almost one in five Americans has some form of mental illness, and these conditions are often stigmatized and treated differently from physical health conditions.

“Defeating this stigma is critical to helping people feel more comfortable accessing the support they need when they need it,” said Dr. Debra Pinals, psychiatrist and MDHHS medical director for behavioral health. “Mental health and well-being are just as important as our physical well-being. At MDHHS, we honor Mental Health Month by emphasizing that it is okay to reach out for help and connecting people with the right resources.”

All Michiganders are encouraged to observe Mental Health Month by reaching out to talk to those who may be struggling or feel isolated, Pinals said. Human contact can make a difference, even if that contact needs to be done virtually.

Learn more ways to cope at [Michigan.gov/StayWell](#). Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](#) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](#).

###