



# THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



## COMMISSIONERS

Terence Farrell  
Kathi Cozzone  
Michelle Kichline

## OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS

313 W. Market Street, Suite 6202  
P.O. Box 2748  
West Chester, PA 19380-0991  
(610) 344-6100

April 25, 2015

**Contact:** *Caroline Smith, Mental Health Deputy Administrator*  
610-344-6265 or email: [casmith@chesco.org](mailto:casmith@chesco.org)

## Chester County Observes National Mental Health Awareness Month

**For Immediate Release** – Each May, Chester County recognizes National Mental Health Awareness Month with activities aimed at increasing the public’s awareness and understanding about mental health and recovery. This year, Chester County’s Department of Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MH/IDD) is collaborating with stakeholders throughout the area to offer a wide range of opportunities for learning and enrichment. This year’s theme is “Walk in My Shoes.”

The recognition for mental health awareness will begin on May 3, when Chester County’s Commissioners will present a Proclamation in support of National Mental Health Awareness Month at the Sunshine meeting. Members of the local mental health community will accept the Proclamation and share their experiences at the public meeting.

May 3 is also when the first of five free Mental Health First Aid classes will be offered in Chester County during Mental Health Awareness Month. This internationally acclaimed eight-hour public education program is designed to teach all citizens how to assist someone who may be developing a mental health concern or a crisis. Since the program began in Chester County in July, 2014, more than 1,000 residents have been certified as Mental Health First Aiders.

Another free learning opportunity this month is the two-hour QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention training. Two QPR classes will be offered to the general public, in addition to two offered to Chester County employees as part of the County’s wellness program.

A Community Conversation about Mental Health will be held at the Phoenixville Senior Center on Monday, May 16 at 12:45 PM. This event is designed to be a catalyst for individuals to begin a dialogue, and feel more comfortable talking about the topic. The public is invited to attend.

Many other activities have been planned to celebrate and recognize the achievements of individuals using Chester County’s Mental Health services. Those who are involved in mental health programs may participate in a photo contest or submit writing samples using “Walk in My Shoes” theme. Some mental health programs are participating in a volunteer challenge and others are participating in musical events planned this month.

Additional information about all of these activities can be found at [www.chesco.org/mhidd](http://www.chesco.org/mhidd), or at the Government Services Center lobby display during May.