



THE STIGMA FREE ZONE NEWS OF NJ

Bringing the Mental Health Conversation to New Jersey

We report on a volunteer initiative of organizations, nonprofits, schools, libraries, hospitals, First Responders, and houses of worship working independently or with local government to make NJ free from the stigma of mental illness. Anyone can form a SFZ Task Force to educate locally. Just pledge to "do something about mental illness."



Governor Richard Codey Is Speaking to NJ Students About Mental Illness, Suicide, and Resiliency

By Cynthia Chazen

The Codey Fund for Mental Health was created in 2012, by former NJ Governor Richard Codey and his wife Mary Jo, "to ensure that compassionate, quality mental healthcare is accessible to everyone and that the stigma associated with mental illness is overcome through public awareness and education." Since its founding, The Morris County based non-profit has worked tirelessly to spread a Stigma-Free message across NJ. To date, according to Fund Executive Director, Julie Bannon, the Codeys and company have succeeded in convincing 30+ towns and 10 universities, including Codey's alma mater, Fairleigh Dickinson, to adopt a Stigma - Free mission.

When Mr. Codey became NJ Governor in 2004, his first thought was for mental health: a cause that is both near and dear to his heart. He immediately established a Task Force to look into reforms for the state's mental health system and he allocated \$200 million for housing units for individuals with mental illness. Codey strongly favored including mental health funding in employee medical benefit packages and Medicare. He also created The Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma, which still operates today, to spread mental health education and recognize NJ volunteers from all walks of life who are fighting stigma.

Codey's messages have been especially well-received by young people. In early March, he visited the Bergen County Academies in Hackensack in response to an invitation from teacher, Liz Fuentes, co- advisor to a student advocacy group called "The Mental Health Club," formed last year, to speak at their Green Ribbon Wellness Day. Fuentes told The SFZ News that 2 girls started the club, and it has been very well-received. Students at The Academies are quite open about mental illness, which Fuentes attributes to their realization that mental illness is so wide-spread.

At the Academies, students are high achievers with high academic expectations. Fuentes attributed a lot of the student stress she sees to their desire to keep up with rigorous academic standards. When I asked her how this plays out at school, she answered "Students are always exhausted." She added that the problems of student depression and anxiety are viewed as "a huge problem here," and faculty are searching for ways to help students develop better coping mechanisms to improve their mental health. According to Fuentes, having Codey speak was a way to show students important people "are watching out for them, and this puts them at ease."

Codey was met with the rapt attention of 1100 teens, as he spoke to their concerns about mental illness, and shared facts and a compassionate perspective on anxiety, depression, teen suicide and suicidal thoughts, and developing personal resiliency. He emphasized that anyone suffering

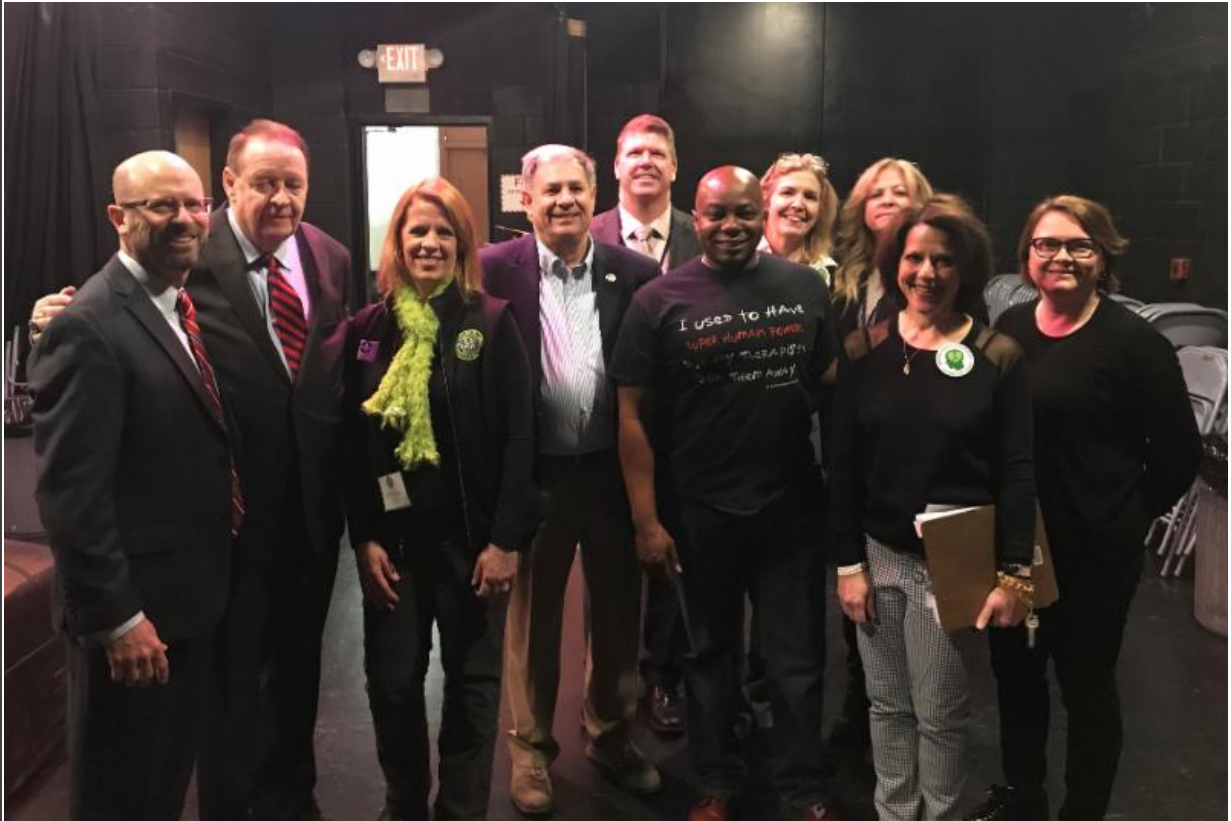
from a mental health condition must not be ashamed, and according to Fuentes, "this made a huge difference to students." Fuentes also added that since mental health is such a big topic of conversation among students and staff, plans for follow-up are now under active discussion.

The Codey Fund, along with The Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris Counties, has recently developed an "Auxiliary Staff Workshop," geared towards school para-professionals to help school staff such as secretaries, lunch program personnel, and custodians recognize signs and symptoms of mental health issues in students. They have found that students are often friendly with such staff, and less guarded in their speaking with these professionals. The staff learn how to recognize symptoms of mental illness and they are taught to listen and help the students by contacting the right school staff who can assist them before a crisis sets in. Two clinically licensed Mental Health Professionals with knowledge and understanding of childhood mental health disorders conduct the workshops.

Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco also spoke, sharing his support of the Stigma-Free Zone movement, in which he has been active since the campaign's 2010 inception in Paramus, NJ.

[VISIT THE CODEY FUND WEBSITE](#)

[LIKE THE CODEY FUND ON FACEBOOK](#)





Dear Ms. Chazen:

Thank you for contacting me to express your concerns about a proposed rule from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding “protected classes” of drugs under Medicare Part D. Your opinion is very important to me, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond to you on this important issue.

When Medicare Part D became law in 2003, Congress recognized that certain classes of drugs should receive certain protections, so that beneficiaries would have access to all available medications. **These six classes of drugs are antidepressants, antipsychotics, anticonvulsants, immunosuppressants, antiretrovirals, and antineoplastics.** On November 30, 2018, CMS published a proposed rule for Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D outlining proposed policy changes to take effect as soon as contract year 2020. Among these changes are proposals that would create exceptions to the protected classes policy. This proposed rule seeks to allow Medicare Part D plans to use prior authorization, which would require health care providers to obtain approval from the health insurer before the drug is prescribed, as well as step therapy, which would allow Medicare Part D plans to require that patients try lower-cost drugs that may be less effective first, and only approve the specific drug prescribed by the health care provider after the lower-cost alternative fails to work. Additionally, the proposed rule would allow Medicare Part D plans to exclude new drugs from their formularies that would previously have been protected. While CMS has cited potential cost savings as a reason for proposing these changes, I believe this will reduce

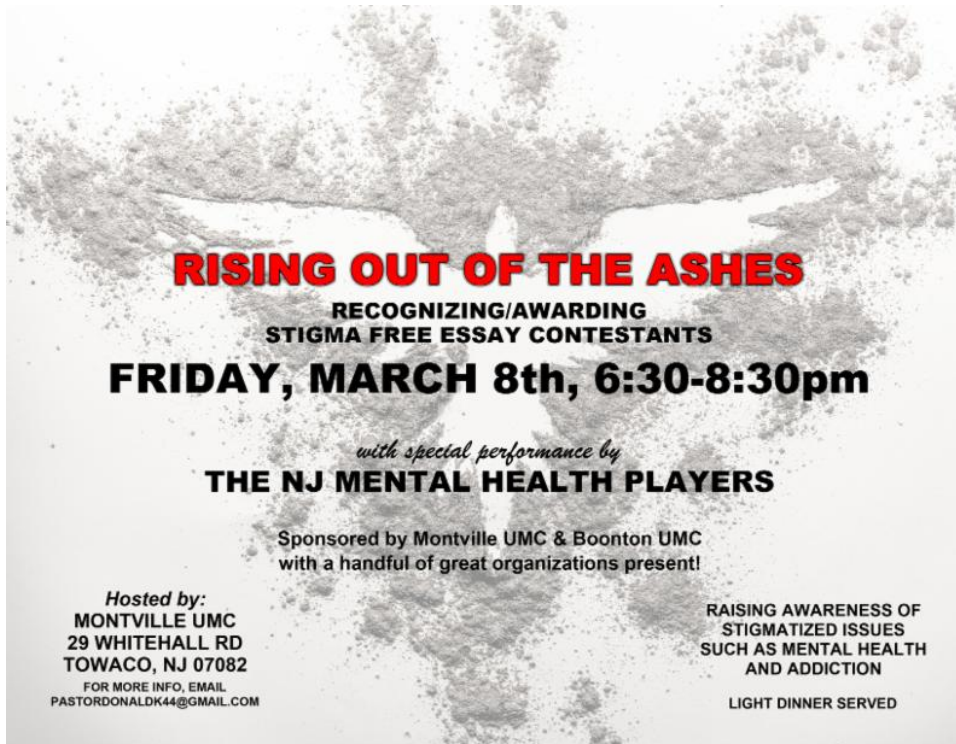
access to needed medication and lead to increased health care costs overall. The comment period for this proposed rule closed on January 25, 2019. Thank you again for sharing your views and please know I will keep them in mind as I continue monitoring this very important issue.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts with me. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance. I invite you to visit my website <http://menendez.senate.gov> to learn more about how I am standing up for NJ families in the US Senate.

Sincerely,



BOB MENENDEZ
United States Senator



RIISING OUT OF THE ASHES
RECOGNIZING/AWARDING
STIGMA FREE ESSAY CONTESTANTS
FRIDAY, MARCH 8th, 6:30-8:30pm
with special performance by
THE NJ MENTAL HEALTH PLAYERS
Sponsored by Montville UMC & Boonton UMC
with a handful of great organizations present!

Hosted by:
MONTVILLE UMC
29 WHITEHALL RD
TOWACO, NJ 07082
FOR MORE INFO, EMAIL
PASTORDONALDK44@GMAIL.COM

RAISING AWARENESS OF
STIGMATIZED ISSUES
SUCH AS MENTAL HEALTH
AND ADDICTION
LIGHT DINNER SERVED

Stigma Free Essay Contest Winner: Junior High

Melody Hart, Homeschooled 8th grade Student from Gillette, NJ, Wins Essay Contest

"Going Home"

The word 'stigma' is a Latin word meaning "a mark made on skin by burning with a hot iron." In our society, it refers to the prejudice that results from the labels we put on people who have some undesirable condition, such as mental illness. More often than not, it becomes a building block for a jail cell that eventually imprisons the one who is inflicted. I will focus on my experience with my grandfather, the effects of stigma in his life, and how awareness can cause a positive change.

Three years ago, grandfather had stayed in our home in New Jersey. 'Papa' as I called him, came to us after having been evicted from his condominium in Florida. He had stopped taking his medication to treat paranoia schizophrenia and made decisions that triggered his whole life to come crashing down.

Mom arranged for Papa to fly to our place. After a medical checkup, he was told that cancer had spread to his kidney. It seemed that in a split second, our 'lenses' had been instantaneously

changed, like that of a camera. It is strange how a dark moment can cause us to see things we have never seen before. Walls that had been built up over decades seemed to have crumbled to fragments in just a few minutes. We all became more aware of Papa, in all his humanity; rather than 'our dad with the mental handicap.' We all realized how deep-rooted was the stigma he carried, even amongst his closest family members.

During Papa's stay, I got to know him as we spent time playing the piano, walking, and sharing stories of the past. The grandfather I got to know was someone who was passionate, musically talented, highly intelligent, and one who did amazing architectural renderings!

Papa seemed to always have this quiet frustration about how people treated him. Even with his clouded judgment and perception, he knew when people shunned him. He was fully aware of his family members who had cut him off from their lives because of the fear and shame of the stigma he carried. This caused him much more pain than the strange looks and responses he would get from others.

Each person has the right to "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness", but for a person stigmatized with mental health, that right is taken away. You see, Papa lived within 2 prisons – the one caused by mental dysfunction; the other, created by stigma. The effect of stigma is deep and not easy to comprehend. A stigmatized person may never feel he has a home. It is probably why Papa was always restless and seemed to be chasing something he could never find.

Part of the solution lies in awareness. When my family opened up and embraced my grandfather without judgment, we saw greatness in him. He felt true acceptance, love and a sense of belonging. Awareness breaks down walls, and allows us to see the value in a person who is different from us.

I believe that if we made more effort to spread awareness of mental illness, stigma would diminish. The climate in our communities would become one that helps to foster healing, rather than judgment and fear of those who face mental health challenges.



 **Mental Health Editor** @cynchazen · 6/17/17
Depression is real.
Smiling, mental toughness, even ice cream don't help.
End stigma. #MensMentalHealthMonth

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[NJersey.Com: Englewood Cliffs Mayor Censured by Council over Alleged Threat to Punch Borough Attorney](#)

[Harvard Business Review: 5 Ways Bosses Can Reduce the Stigma of Mental Health at Work](#)

[RWJ Barnabas Health: Peer Recovery Program 2018 Annual Report](#)

[Parsippany Focus: Freeholders Approve Use of County Owned Residences at Greystone for Women at Risk of Homelessness](#)

Eighth Annual Todd Ouida Children's Foundation Conference *Creating Safety For and Within Infants and Children*

Thursday, May 9, 2019

8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Montclair State University - University Hall Conference Center

Honoring Mary Ann Uzzi and Cynthia Chazen of the Stigma Free Initiative with the Todd Ouida Children's Hero Award

Joy Osofsky, Ph.D.

Paul J Ramsay Chair and Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Former President, ZERO TO THREE

The Effects of Trauma on Young Children: Promoting Safety and Resilience



Sheila M. Marcus, MD

University of Michigan Center for Human Growth and Development, Director, Women's and Perinatal Depression Program, Department of Psychiatry

Promoting Safety and Growth for Traumatized Children and Caregivers: Telepsychiatry for Rural Youth in Michigan



Kaitlin Mulcahy, MA, LPC.

Montclair State University Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health Associate Director, Past President, NJAIMH
The Experience of "Felt Safety" and the Intergenerational Transmission of Safety as Essential in Human Development

David Armstrong

NJ Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (ECCS CoLIN), ICHC Member
A Grandfather's Passion to Transform Early Childhood Systems: Helping Children Be Safe



Special Presentation by Advocates for Children of New Jersey on Census 2020!

#CountAllKids

General registration fee - \$50.00 (\$55 at the door)

Includes breakfast, lunch, parking and take-home resources

For more information, please call 973-655-6685 or email caecmh@montclair.edu

Attendees eligible for Social Work CEUs in accordance with #NJ.A.C. 13:44G-6.4(b)4 & professional development hours for NJ teachers

To register, click on:

<https://8thtofcconference.eventbrite.com>

Co-sponsored by:

Children's Aid and Family Services - Interdisciplinary Council on Development and Learning
New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health - Northeast Regional Terrorism and Disaster Coalition
West Bergen Mental Healthcare - Youth Consultation Service



Landmark Decision: United Healthcare

Used Defective Criteria to Reject Coverage for Mental Health/Addiction Treatment Services, Federal Court Finds

From The Kennedy Forum Website

Ruling Will Impact How Health Insurers Make Coverage Determinations; Sends Powerful Message in the Fight for Parity

Washington D.C. / March 5, 2019 – Chief Magistrate Judge Joseph Spero of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California has found that United Behavioral Health (UBH), the largest managed behavioral health care company in the country, developed review criteria for evaluating the medical necessity of claims for outpatient, intensive outpatient, and residential treatment of mental health and substance use disorders that was inconsistent with generally accepted standards of behavioral health care, and wrongly influenced by a financial incentive to suppress costs.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE](#)



Hackensack Meridian Health
Hackensack University Medical Center

The Front Line In The Opioid Epidemic: A PANEL DISCUSSION



We invite you to meet the experts



Robert C. Garrett, FACHE
CEO, Hackensack Meridian Health



Donald Parker, MSW
CEO, Carrier Clinic



Mark D. Sparta, FACHE
President, Hackensack University Medical Center



Josh Gottheimer
Congressman



Gurbir S. Grewal
NJ Attorney General



Michael Kelly, M.D.
Chair, Orthopedic Surgery,
Hackensack University Medical Center

Thursday, March 21, 2019

3:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.



Wyckoff YMCA
691 Wyckoff Avenue
Wyckoff NJ, 07481

Purpose

This program is for parents, teachers, nurses, school personnel, and others who work with children. The panel will address the current opioid crisis in the community. Current practices for prevention, treatment, along with the perspective of law enforcement and statewide strategy will be presented. A Q&A will follow the panel discussion, providing attendees an opportunity to raise their own questions about the epidemic.

RSVP

This is a free program, space is limited please RSVP to Hackensackumc.org/Opioids.

THANKS TO THE SUPPORTERS OF THE 2019 SFZ NEWS!

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STAY CONNECTED



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