

BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK
NO. 1-21-47

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A HIGHLAND PARK MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

RESOLUTION: Health and Human Services Commission

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park is dedicated to promoting the welfare and well-being of all its residents and recognizes that mental health disorders are a serious and prevalent concern, with the National Institute of Mental Health (a division of the National Institute of Health) reporting that nearly one fifth of U.S. adults live with some form of mental illness (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml>);

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated mental health concerns, with a recent CDC study reporting that “40.9% of 5,470 respondents who completed surveys during June reported an adverse mental or behavioral health condition” (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>);

WHEREAS, the Borough recognizes that mental health disorders, including depression and suicide ideation, may be particularly challenging to teens and young adults, whose sense of identity is still developing and who may lack the capability to adequately describe the struggles they face and/or determine the most effective means to handle their disorder. The World Health Organization reports that “Globally, depression is one of the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents,” and that “suicide is the third leading cause of death in 15-19-year-olds” (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>);

WHEREAS, the Borough recognizes that the parents of these young people, and adults facing their own mental health struggles, may be daunted by the challenge to find affordable, accessible, and effective mental health counseling, support, and resources. The unmet challenges faced by these individuals generate unfortunate ripple effects that negatively affect families, neighborhoods, schools, and the larger community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Borough Council hereby establish a Highland Park Mental Health Commission (HPMHC), whose goal will be to support the mental health and welfare of all Borough of Highland Park residents;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the HPMHC will facilitate the creation of a comprehensive mental health support system for the Highland Park community that promotes lifelong mental wellness, educates the public, and helps the public to access the resources available both in Highland Park and within the larger community area;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that for the betterment of the Borough of Highland Park, the HPMHC will develop recommendations for initiatives that educate and provide enhanced support and resources for improved mental health in the community. The HPMHC shall coordinate and align efforts among the various organizations that provide mental health services; create greater awareness for existing community resources; identify best practices for support and crisis prevention measures; and establish additional mental health programs and support for Highland Park residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission shall consist of up to twelve (12) members appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Borough Council.

The Commission shall be comprised of appointed members and representatives of interested groups in the Borough, as well as resident volunteers, as follows: Mayor’s representative, Borough Council representative, Highland Park schools representative, local private schools representative; Board of Health representative; Borough Social Worker, Highland Park Youth Officer; Highland Park Teen Center Coordinator; local mental health services provider; mental health professional; and two (2) residents to be selected from volunteer applications. Volunteers shall demonstrate a strong personal interest in making an impact in the community related to mental health. The members shall serve without compensation and must be residents of the Borough of Highland Park, except where they serve the Highland Park community as local service providers.

ADOPTED: January 19, 2021

ATTEST:

Joan Hullings, Borough Clerk

I, Joan Hullings, Borough Clerk of the Borough of Highland Park, New Jersey, do hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Borough Council of said Borough on the 19th day of January, 2021.

Joan Hullings, Borough Clerk

RECORD OF COUNCIL VOTES

Council Member	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Canavera				
Foster				
George				
Hale				
Hersh				
Kim-Chohan				