



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Office of Mental Health Distributes \$75,000 from 'Mental Illness Anti-Stigma Fund'

ROBERT G. ORTT July 5, 2017

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ALBANY, NY- The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) today announced awards totaling \$75,000 for projects that help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

The funding comes from taxpayer contributions received through a voluntary tax check-off program launched in 2016. This program allows taxpayers to donate easily to the 'Mental Illness Anti-Stigma Fund' when filing their NYS taxes, similar to other provisions where taxpayers can support Alzheimer's research, breast cancer awareness, and various other efforts.

"The Office of Mental Health works tirelessly to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, but this tax check-off program goes a step beyond that," said OMH Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan. "It allows taxpayers to contribute to a cause that matters to them, and to see exactly how those contributions are being used in their communities. The 'Mental Illness Anti-Stigma Fund' allows every New Yorker to play a role in reducing stigma, and we are eager to see the impact these awarded projects will have across the state."

The stigma associated with mental illness remains pervasive and too often discourages or prevents individuals from seeking needed treatment and care. OMH has a long record of promoting initiatives and public awareness programs that are dedicated to eliminating this stigma. This tax check-off program helps OMH fund organizations that are committed to providing information about mental illness and addressing the stigma associated with mental illness.

Senator David Carlucci, sponsor of the tax check-off law, said, "The stigma relating to mental illness can have a very serious effect on a person and can cause many individuals to not seek services that they may need. By providing for an income tax check-off, we will provide an easy way for New Yorkers to help prevent this unnecessary burden for persons with mental illness. I am glad to see this program having an impact on reducing this stigma through the work of the organizations

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