



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# Board Session Agenda Review Form

Meeting date: Wednesday, May 6th, 2026 9:00am

Department: Health & Human Services

Title: Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation

Management Update/Work Session Date: 4/14/2026 Audio/Visual aids

Time Required: 10 Contact: Samantha Andress Phone: x4903

Requested Action: Approve a proclamation designating May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness Month.

Issue, Description & Background: Mental Health America has designated May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness Month. MCHHS will be highlighting the importance of social connection and community to improving both mental and physical well-being. Meaningful connection has shown to be extremely protective against stress, chronic disease, and premature death. MCHHS aspires to a strong and connected community through providing services and supports that advance the mental health of everyone.

Financial Impacts: N/A

Impacts to Department & External Agencies: N/A

List of attachments: Proclamation, Presentation

Presenter: Laura Sprouse, Kelly Martin, Valerie Geer; Community Engagement Chaplain, Family YMCA of Marion & Polk Counties

Department Head Signature: Ryan Matthews Digitally signed by Ryan Matthews Date: 2026.04.20 09:20:03 -07'00'



**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MARION COUNTY, OREGON**

In the matter of proclaiming the month of May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness Month in Marion County.

**PROCLAMATION**

This matter came before the Marion County Board of Commissioners at its regularly scheduled public meeting on May 6, 2026.

**WHEREAS**, mental health is essential to Marion County residents' overall health and well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals experiencing mental health concerns need an understanding, empathic, and encouraging place of belonging as they seek support; and

**WHEREAS**, shame, stigma, and lack of access to treatment actively work against the wellness of individuals and may prevent them from seeking help; and

**WHEREAS**, early intervention during a mental health crisis is essential, and individuals experiencing a mental health crisis should feel empowered to seek timely and appropriate support; and

**WHEREAS**, prevention, education, and awareness decrease stigma, promote a culture of compassion and understanding, and reduce the adverse personal and community impacts of mental health challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, Marion County Health and Human Services believes that a strong, connected community is vital to Marion County families, schools, businesses, and communities, and is committed to providing services and supports to advance the mental health of everyone; now, therefore

**IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED** that the month of May 2026 is Mental Health Awareness Month in Marion County.

Dated in Salem, Oregon this 6th day of May 2026

**MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Chairperson** \_\_\_\_\_

**Commissioner** \_\_\_\_\_

**Commissioner** \_\_\_\_\_



OREGON  
Health & Human Services

# Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation 2026

Laura Sprouse, QMHA-II, Zero Suicide Program Coordinator

Kelly Martin, MPH, Mental Health Promotion Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Marion County HHS

May 6, 2026

# A Year in Review



# The Power of Social Connection

- According to a 2023 report from the Surgeon General, the US is experiencing an epidemic of loneliness – nearly half of Americans report feeling lonely
- Young adults (ages 18-24) and older adults (ages 65+) are the most impacted
- Social connection has numerous health benefits:
  - Boosts resilience
  - Increases productivity
  - Improves our health and longevity by decreasing risks of chronic disease, such as diabetes, stroke, and dementia





Working with the Mid-Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition to create workshops to share the importance of social connection and offer tools and suggestions for boosting connections

Workshops will be created specifically for youth and older adults in addition to a general audience presentation

Will be available for community partners and businesses to use



# **Guest Speaker – Valerie Geer**

Community Outreach Chaplain, Family YMCA of Marion & Polk Counties



# Belonging & Social Connection

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Support Group for grandparents raising grandkids
- NAMI Family Support Group – “We Are Not Alone”
- Mental Health Awareness Month programs
- Trivia nights, member mixers, family dinners, games, and movies
- Art and wellness: prayer collage, creative writing, mental health workshops
- Field trips for seniors



# Signs of Hope

- Started campaign in 2022
- Continued outreach to partners, including:
  - Coalition members
  - Schools
  - Community groups
  - Businesses
- In 2025, over 65 organizations participated and more than 800 signs were displayed throughout Marion and Polk Counties



# Be Seen in Green



May 14<sup>th</sup> - Mental Health Action Day



3<sup>rd</sup> year of implementation



Invite coalition partners to take part and post to social media



Reaching out to school groups and asking them to participate




**Northwest Human Services**  
 1h · 🌐

 Our NWHS team showed up to "Be Seen in Green" for Mental Health Awareness yesterday!

On May 15, we proudly wore green to support mental health, reduce stigma, and stand in solidarity with those impacted by mental health challenges.

Mental health is health — and we're committed to creating a culture of compassion, awareness, and support.

[#BeSeenInGreen](#) [#MentalHealthAwareness](#)  
[#NWHS](#) [#TeamNWHS](#) [#EndTheStigma](#)  
[#CommunityCare](#)




**Santiam Service Integration**  
 2h · 🌐

Mental Health Awareness Day! Cascade Service Integration Team Meeting falls on this... [See more](#)



# Internal Activities

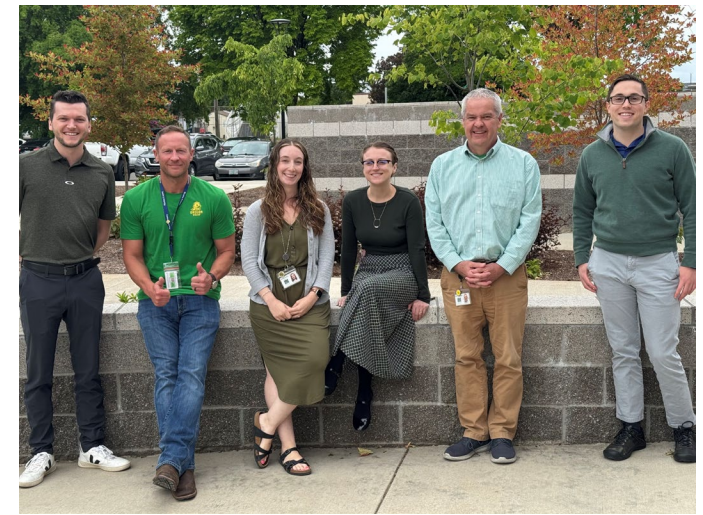
- Connection Challenge Cards
- Weekly mental health tips
- “Be Seen in Green” – May 14<sup>th</sup>
- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Trainings
- Ongoing implementation of Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale in electronic health record

## CONNECTION CHALLENGE

Complete your challenge card by participating in any or all of these activities with coworkers and others! Write in the date you completed the activity.

Name/Worksite: \_\_\_\_\_

Play a board/card game _____	Send a text to check in with someone _____	Do something kind for a coworker _____	Share a meal with someone _____	Go for a walk with a coworker _____
Call someone you haven't talked to in a while _____	Have a face-to-face convo instead of using Teams _____	Invite someone to spend time with you _____	Talk to someone without any distractions _____	Disconnect from social media for a weekend _____
Pay someone a compliment _____	Accept an invitation to spend time with someone _____	Tell someone you care about them _____	Make someone laugh _____	Learn something new about a coworker _____
Recommend a book/music/movie/TV show/podcast to someone _____	Leave a note of gratitude on someone's desk _____	Take a picture with someone you love and share it _____	Visit a new place with a friend or coworker _____	Have coffee with a coworker before work _____
Volunteer in your community _____	Enjoy a meal with no electronic devices _____	Offer to help someone with a task _____	Make a new friend or reconnect with an old friend _____	Surprise someone with their favorite drink or snack _____





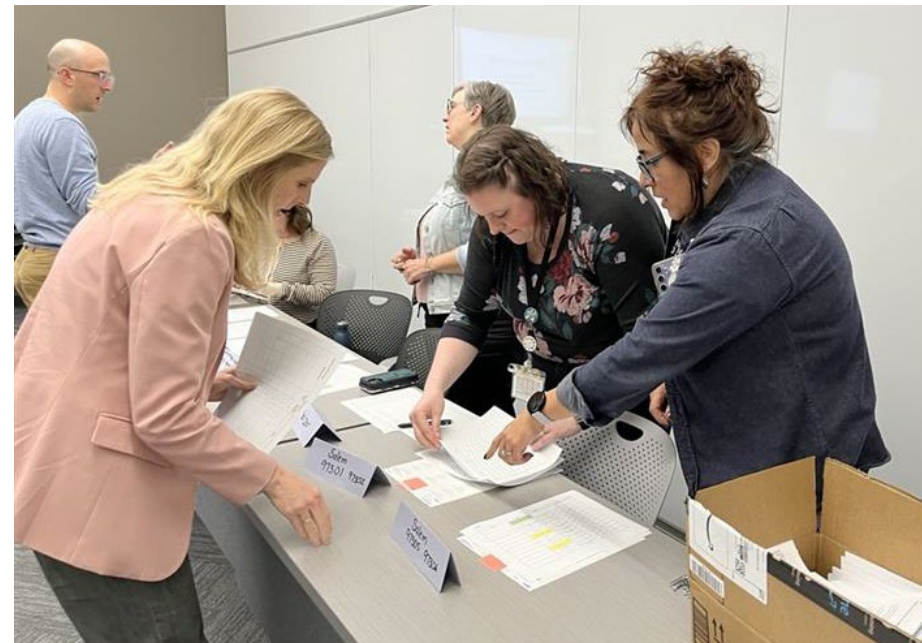
**Need someone  
to listen?**

Call or text **988**

**988**  
OREGON



MID-VALLEY  
Suicide  
Prevention  
Coalition



**Getting help is important!**

In partnership with MVSPC, we are promoting 988 to local businesses to emphasize the accessibility and availability of mental health supports

## Other resources

**988 Lifeline**- 24/7/365 support by call, text and chat –  
[www.988lifeline.org](http://www.988lifeline.org)

**Marion County Behavioral Health Crisis Center (formerly PCC)** - 24/7 help on the phone or in-person – 503-585-4949

**Oregon YouthLine** - text “teen2teen” to 839863

**AgriStress Helpline** – call or text 833-897-2474

**Veterans Crisis Line** – call 988, press 1



**Visit the Mid-Valley Suicide  
Prevention Coalition website  
for more resources,  
information, and events!**

# Thank you!

Kelly Martin

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Laura Sprouse

[lsprouse@co.marion.or.us](mailto:lsprouse@co.marion.or.us)

