
BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Purple Lights Shine in Harford County for National Recovery Month; Presentations Highlight
Addiction Biology, Ex-NBA Player's Story**

BEL AIR, Md., (Aug. 27, 2018) - Represented by the color purple, National Recovery Month shines a light on recovery and raises awareness and understanding of mental health and substance use disorders. Harford County will join voices nationwide this September to recognize Recovery Month with purple lights on buildings countywide and a series of free events for citizens of all ages. Presentations will include a national expert on addiction biology from Harvard Medical School, and a riveting story of recovery from a former NBA basketball player.

To help raise awareness, the Harford County Health Department, in partnership with the Town of Bel Air, delivered purple stringed lights to businesses on Main Street and encouraged them to hang the lights in their windows for the month of September. Other participants include the Harford County Sheriff's Office headquarters and precincts, the Harford County Public Schools A. A. Roberty Building, and University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health. The municipalities of Aberdeen and Havre de Grace have also been invited to join the effort.

"Recovery Month is something that should be acknowledged and celebrated," Deputy Health Officer of Harford County Marcy Austin said. "We appreciate our partnerships with local agencies and businesses, and we are proud to recognize those who are in recovery. They inspire

others with the message that recovery is possible and resources are available to make it possible."

County Executive Barry Glassman has also ordered the Harford County Administrative Office Building in Bel Air to be illuminated with purple lights and a banner will be displayed on the building with contact information for those in need of help.

Several events related to recovery, treatment and prevention are also planned in the coming weeks.

A highlight of the month's lineup is "Pathways to Recovery," a candid presentation and discussion featuring Dr. Bertha Madras, a member of President Trump's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. Dr. Madras, a Harvard Medical School professor specializing in addiction biology, will discuss national strategies to end the opioid epidemic and her groundbreaking research on substance use and the adolescent brain. The Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy will host this event at Bel Air High School on Thursday, September 20 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Audience members will have the opportunity to pose questions anonymously. Questions can also be emailed in advance to odcp@harfordcountymd.gov.

Next, former NBA point guard for the Boston Celtics Chris Herren will share his harrowing story of addiction and journey to recovery, geared to students twelve and older. Chris will talk about his rise in professional sports, his descent into addiction, and the loss of his career, family and friends, followed by his miraculous recovery. Chris' appearance at Havre de Grace High School on Tuesday, October 9 at 6:30 p.m. is made possible by the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy and the Havre de Grace High School PTA.

Students, their parents and caregivers, and all concerned citizens are invited to attend these free presentations.

Other Recovery Month events include Rage Against Addiction's Recovery Runs on the Ma and Pa Trail; a screening of the movie "The Anonymous People" at Emory Church in Street; and the annual "Human Rope to Stop the Dope" awareness initiative at Mt. Zion Church in Bel Air. A podcast featuring the Harford County Health Department's behavioral health services will also air in September on the website for Harford County Living.

Through the Twitter handle @HarfordCountyMD, Harford County government will participate in a statewide "Twitter storm" from 2 – 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 19, in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration and the state Opioid

Operational Command Center. Tweets will provide information on naloxone, treatment options, and other resources.

For more information about the above activities, please visit www.harfordcountymd.gov/odcp or contact the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy at 410-638-3333.

“Prevention, treatment and recovery are year-round efforts, but National Recovery Month is an opportunity for Harford County to come together to support those in recovery and light a path for those still in darkness,” County Executive Barry Glassman said. “I encourage anyone whose life has been touched by addiction, and all citizens, to join us this September by participating in events and shining a light for recovery.”



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