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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STATEMENT FROM FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY ON MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS MONTH**

"Mental illness and substance use disorders exact a devastating social and economic cost on our families and communities. One in five adults is likely to experience a mental health disorder in any given year. That means mental illness touches every family in every neighborhood across our city and nation. We cannot continue to allow our family, friends and neighbors to suffer needlessly. All mental illness is treatable, but only if we bring it out of the shadows so people are not afraid or ashamed to seek treatment.

All of us live in developing countries when it comes to mental health. We need a coherent, evidenced-based approach to prevention, intervention and address the risks at every stage of life. We must re-align our criminal justice, education and public health policies so that children and adults are not punished for being ill. We must provide new options for the mentally ill and we can wait no longer.

In New York City, we are making it a priority to destigmatize mental illness and substance use disorders and create more services, better services and services that are easier to access. Cities can lead and I urge others to join us in making mental health a priority."

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