

ISSUE RECOVERY MONTH PROCLAMATIONS

Issuing a proclamation on behalf of your city, county, town, or State is an important tool in raising awareness for **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**. A proclamation is an official announcement that publicly recognizes an initiative such as **Recovery Month**. Proclamations are typically signed and issued by Federal officials, governors, State legislators, or other government officials at the local level. By issuing a proclamation designating September as **Recovery Month**, your community will bring attention to mental and/or substance use disorders and spread the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

In 2011, 164 proclamations were signed to support **Recovery Month**, including one issued by President Barack Obama. For the past 11 years, the Executive Office of the President of the United States has supported the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**, within the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**, by working to help raise public awareness and support for those with behavioral health conditions, as well as their communities and families. The Presidential proclamation recognizes the importance of treatment and recovery across the country. Equally as important are the hundreds of proclamations issued at the local level each year, which is where you can help.

Create a proclamation to highlight this year's theme: **"Join the Voices for Recovery: It's Worth It,"** which emphasizes that while the road to recovery may be difficult, the benefits of preventing and overcoming mental and/or substance use disorders are significant and valuable to individuals, families, and communities. The theme also highlights that people in recovery achieve healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally, and contribute in positive ways to their communities.

Use this document to help you draft and promote a proclamation.

Contact Public Officials...

Before you begin writing a proclamation to designate September as **Recovery Month** in your area, research local officials to gauge their interests and beliefs about treatment and recovery support services.

Since some legislatures are not in session during the summer months, reach out to your public officials at least three months in advance of **Recovery Month**. Write a letter or send an email to initiate contact with your local official's communications office, and follow up with a phone call. During the initial conversation, explain the **Recovery Month** observance, detail your local activities, and discuss the importance of their support for this annual event. If your local official's office is unfamiliar with the proclamation process, explain that it's a simple way for the government to recognize the importance of treatment for and recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders – and that it can encourage those in need to seek help. Once you receive confirmation that the official might support **Recovery Month** and issue a proclamation, it's time to start writing.



Media Outreach

Decide on a Style...

When you plan your **Recovery Month** proclamation, there is a traditional style as well as a modern style of writing these statements. While these two different styles differ in format, they are equally effective to generate awareness.

- **Traditional proclamations** begin with a series of statements starting with the words “whereas,” which details the current state of affairs and suggests the reasoning behind the proclamation. Each clause notes the problems or issues being addressed and is followed by a concluding phrase beginning with “therefore,” which specifically requests the support or action needed.
- **Modern proclamations** are written in a letter format (for instance, the **Presidential Proclamation**). They highlight the same points as a traditional proclamation, but are written as a statement.

Samples of both formats are included at the end of this document to personalize and share with interested officials in your area. Examples of signed and issued proclamations can be viewed on the **Recovery Month** website at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov> under the “Proclamations” section.

Develop a Proclamation...

Now that you’re familiar with the different proclamation styles and their purpose, use the following checklist when drafting your proclamation and working to gain public support for your efforts.

- Determine your local official’s preferred writing style (traditional or modern);
- Offer to draft the proclamation;
- Refer to the examples at the end of this document to help draft your proclamation;
- Insert local information or statistics that will resonate with your community members (see “**Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Resources**” provided in this document);
- Submit the proclamation to your local official’s office and allow time for the official to review and sign the proclamation;
- Follow up frequently to check the status of your proclamation; and
- Once it has been signed, display copies of your proclamation in public places.
- Post your proclamation on the **Recovery Month website**, **Facebook page**, and **Twitter account**.

Personalize...

Personalizing your proclamation allows your message to resonate deeper with the community. The following resources may be helpful in providing local information or statistics about treatment and recovery services that you may want to include:

- Single-State Agency (SSA) Directory
- SAMHSA’s *National Survey on Drug Use and Health*
- SAMHSA’s *National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*
- SAMHSA’s Recovery Statement
- SAMHSA’s National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS)
- SAMHSA’s Drug Abuse Warning Network
- SAMHSA’s Treatment Episode Data

Media Outreach

Publicize...

Publicize your proclamation to bring further attention to **Recovery Month** and generate momentum for the national observance in your community. Visit local businesses, health clubs, libraries, lobbies of hotels, schools, college campuses, community mental health centers, and/or government buildings to see if they allow you to display copies of your proclamation. If permitted you can put up a **Recovery Month** poster (found at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov/~media/images/bannersandlogos/2012Poster.ashx>) to garner additional attention and increase interest.

Arrange a press conference or “town-hall” meeting and have your local official sign or present the proclamation there as an additional publicity option. The event can be accompanied by a roundtable discussion on issues related to mental and/or substance use disorders. Ideas for panelists include treatment and service providers, families affected by mental and/or substance use disorders, members of the military affected by these disorders, and other individuals already in recovery. For information on how to plan a **Recovery Month** event of this magnitude, refer to the “**Promote Recovery Month with Events**” document in this toolkit.

Lastly, you can have your proclamation featured in a local publication to increase awareness. Distribute electronic copies of the document to the “local” or “metro” desk of your town’s newspapers, along with a press release to announce the signing of the **Recovery Month** proclamation. For tips on how to write an effective press release, refer to the “**Press Materials for Your Recovery Month Event**” document in this toolkit.

Share...

Post a copy of your proclamation on the **Recovery Month** website, <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>, and send it electronically to recoverymonth@samhsa.hhs.gov or in hard copy to:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
ATTN: Consumer Affairs/**Recovery Month**
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
1 Choke Cherry Road
Rockville, MD 20857

Media Outreach

Consult Resources...

For more information on **Recovery Month** and services available to those in need, please refer to the following resources:

- **SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)**, provides 24-hour, free and confidential information about mental and/or substance use disorders and prevention, treatment, and recovery referrals in English or Spanish.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, provides a free, 24-hour helpline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- **SAMHSA's "Find Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment" website**, <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>, contains information about treatment options and special services located in your area.
- The **Recovery Month** website, <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>, contains all the materials from this toolkit and a wide variety of relevant resources.

Inclusion of websites and event examples in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 1: TRADITIONAL FORMAT

WHEREAS, behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness; and

WHEREAS, prevention of mental and/or substance use disorders works, treatment is effective, and people recover in our area and around the Nation; and

WHEREAS, the benefits of preventing and overcoming mental and/or substance use disorders are significant and valuable to individuals, families, and the community at large; and

WHEREAS, people in recovery achieve healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally, and contribute in positive ways to their communities; and

WHEREAS, we must encourage relatives and friends of people with mental and/or substance use disorders to implement preventive measures, recognize the signs of a problem, and guide those in need to appropriate treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, 2.6 million people received specialty treatment for a substance use disorder and more than 31.3 million adults aged 18 or older received services for mental health problems, according to the **2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health**. Given the serious nature of this public health problem, we must continue to reach the millions more who need help; and

WHEREAS, to help more people achieve and sustain long-term recovery, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**, the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**, the **White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)**, and **[Name of State, City, County or Treatment Organization]** invite all residents of **[State/City/Town]** to participate in **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I **[name and title of your elected official]**, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of **[City, State, or Locality]**, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2012 as

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

In **[City or State]** and call upon the people of **[City or State]** to observe this month with appropriate programs, activities, and ceremonies to support this year's theme, **"Join the Voices for Recovery: It's Worth It."**

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this [day of month] day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two-hundred and thirty-seventh.

Signature
[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 2: MODERN FORMAT

Mental and/or substance use disorders affect all communities nationwide, but with commitment and support, people with these disorders can achieve healthy lifestyles and lead rewarding lives in recovery. In 2010, 2.6 million people aged 12 or older received specialty treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol use problem in the past year, and more than 31.3 million adults aged 18 or older received mental health services in the past year. By seeking help, people who experience mental and/or substance use disorders can embark on a new path toward improved health and overall wellness.

The focus of **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** this September is to celebrate their journey. This year's **Recovery Month** theme, "**Join the Voices for Recovery: It's Worth It,**" emphasizes that while the road to recovery may be difficult, the benefits of preventing and overcoming mental and/or substance use disorders are significant and valuable to individuals, families, and communities. The theme also emphasizes that people in recovery can achieve a healthy lifestyle, both physically and emotionally, while contributing in positive ways to the community. **Recovery Month** spreads the message that behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness, and that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

That's a message we need to spread far and wide. The impact of mental and/or substance use disorders is apparent in our local community, and an estimated **XX [thousand/million]** people in **[city or state]** are affected by these conditions. According to the **2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health**, in 2010, 23.1 million persons aged 12 or older needed treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol use problem (9.1 percent of persons aged 12 or older). Of these, 2.6 million (1.0 percent of persons aged 12 or older and 11.2 percent of those who needed treatment) received treatment at a specialty facility.

Also in 2010, out of the 45.9 million Americans aged 18 or older who had any mental illness in the past year, only 17.9 million received mental health services in the past year. Through **Recovery Month**, people become more aware and able to recognize the signs of mental and/or substance use disorders. Managing the effects of these conditions can help build better futures and reduce the societal cost of these conditions.

We, and others across the United States, need to recognize the achievements of those who have achieved long-term recovery and share with others how recovery can positively benefit one's life.

For 23 years, **Recovery Month** has worked to improve the lives of those affected by mental and/or substance use disorders by raising awareness of these diseases and educating communities about the treatment and recovery resources that are available. For the above reasons, I am asking the citizens of **[City or State]** to join me in celebrating this September as **National Recovery Month**.



Media Outreach

I, **[name and title of elected official]**, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2012 as

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

In [City or State] and call upon our community to observe this month with compelling programs and events that support this year's theme, **"Join the Voices for Recovery: It's Worth It."**

Signature
[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]