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Representative Hunschofsky Honored with EPIC Award from Mental Health America of Southeast Florida

Parkland, FL. – On May 25, 2022, **Representative Christine Hunschofsky (D- Parkland)** will be honored by Mental Health America of Southeast Florida at the 26th Annual EPIC Awards Luncheon at the Signature Grand. Mental Health America of Southeast Florida was founded in Broward County in 1955 and works to promote mental health and victory over mental illness and related challenges through education, prevention, advocacy, research, and empowerment.

Representative Hunschofsky is being honored for her mental health advocacy. As the mayor of Parkland during the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy in 2018, she has mobilized services and resources for her community to help start and continue healing. She continues to be a great advocate in recognizing the impact of mental health and has taken a lead role in making sure the state continues to push for better resources for those in need. In her first term as a State Legislator, Representative Hunschofsky filed legislation to create the Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse. She was appointed to serve on the Commission by Speaker Chris Sprowls and currently serves as the Chair of its Business Operations Subcommittee.

“This award is very special to me,” said **Representative Hunschofsky**. “I saw first-hand the need for services in our community not just in the immediate hours and days after the shooting but now in the years following. Taking care of our mental health and physical health is key to living a healthy life, and I am pleased to bring my shared experiences to the state level and work to make a positive difference for Floridians. Thank you to Mental Health America of Southeast Florida for the recognition.”

Paul Jaquith, President, Mental Health America of Southeast Florida stated, “These awards are presented to members of our community who have exhibited exceptional service to our community through their actions, advocacy, leadership or service delivery to the most vulnerable in our community. We are

pleased to announce that State Representative Christine Hunschofsky, District 96, was nominated by a member of the community who recognized her active involvement as the then Mayor of Parkland to bring much-needed services to her community, including mental health resources, suicide prevention, and most importantly her efforts to promote self-care for community members to help reduce the stigma associated with asking for help. She continues as a State Representative to promote Mental Health as a priority.”

The additional EPIC Award winners are:

- John D. Aquino, MPA, Henderson Behavioral Health
- Eileen D’Ambrosio, South Florida State Hospital
- Suzette B. Fleischmann, LHMC, Department of Children and Families
- Tania Hamilton, LHMC, Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services/Nova Southeastern University
- Maria Hernandez, United Way of Broward County
- Dr. Thomas Smith and Dr. Sheryl Zayas, The Special Purpose Outreach Team (SPOT) Mobile Clinic
- Beth Tache, Broward Mental Health Summit
- Helen Leitch, Mental Health America

For more information on Mental Health America of Southeast Florida or to purchase event tickets, please visit [Home | MHA - MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA™ \(mhasefl.org\)](https://www.mhasefl.org).

About the Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse: The Commission was a recommendation of the 20th Statewide Grand Jury, empaneled after the February 14, 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland. The Grand Jury’s report highlighted deficiencies in funding, leadership, and services related to mental health care throughout Florida and called on legislators, the Governor, and others who make up what they called a patchwork system of mental health service providers to investigate and resolve critical deficiencies in our mental health system. The Commission was tasked with analyzing the current system in Florida and making recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature to examine the current methods of providing mental health and substance abuse services in the state and to improve the effectiveness of current practices, procedures, programs, and initiatives in providing such services; identify any barriers or deficiencies in the delivery of such services; and recommend changes to existing laws, rules, and policies necessary to implement the Commission’s recommendations. For more information on the Commission, please visit: [Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse - Florida Department of Children and Families \(myflfamilies.com\)](https://www.myflfamilies.com)

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