

## Merger bolsters mental health services



Photos courtesy: Mark Gossman PR

**Pictured (l-r):** Michael Stoltz, LCSW, chief executive officer, Association for Mental Health and Wellness; Hon. Daniel Panico, Brookhaven Town councilman and deputy town supervisor; Dr. Kristie Golden, Ph.D., associate director of operations at Stony Brook School of Medicine, department of psychiatry, and; New York State Senator Philip Boyle.

Three Suffolk-based non-profits dedicated to helping people with mental illness officially announced their merger and will now operate under the new name, Association for Mental Health and Wellness (MHAW) in Ronkonkoma. The organizations are the Clubhouse of Suffolk, Inc., Suffolk County United Veterans (SCUV) and the Mental Health Association in Suffolk, Inc. (MHASC). The announcement culminates a two-year transition where all three organizations have been working under one administrative umbrella.

“As the field of healthcare evolves with public policy changes and promising new technologies, the Association for Mental Health and Wellness is positioned to help ensure that mental health is considered as important to one’s overall wellness as physical health for children, veterans and adults of all ages,” commented Michael Stoltz, LCSW.

Stoltz was executive director of Clubhouse since its inception in 1990 and will now serve in that top leadership post for the Association for Mental Health and Wellness. Clubhouse provided psychiatric rehabilitation and vocational support services to some 1,200 people each year.

A key part of this new partnership will be added program capacity to address the many unmet behavioral health and addiction needs of homeless veterans, especially those recently returning from multiple deployments in the Middle East, explained Thomas Ronayne,

director of the Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency.

***“I look forward to a continued strong alliance between Suffolk County and our community partners in supporting veterans in their time of need, whenever and wherever that may be.”***

“We have learned from our veterans that there is hope, health and recovery after mental health setbacks. This new association will help to ensure that wellness beyond adversity is attainable for those who have proudly served our country,” Ronayne said. “I look forward to a continued strong alliance between Suffolk County and our community partners in supporting veterans in their time of need, whenever and wherever that may be.”

### Association for Mental Health and Wellness

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