

WHEREAS, Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, with over 70,000 lethal drug overdoses in 2018 and;

WHEREAS, Opioid addiction is driving this epidemic, with over 47,000 overdose deaths related to prescription opioids and illicit opioids and;

WHEREAS, Americans are more likely to die of an opioid overdose than they are from a car accident or by guns (homicide/suicide) and;

WHEREAS, the current number of opioid-related overdose deaths is five times higher than in 1999, coinciding with a nearly 300 percent increase in the sale of opioid pain medications during that time; and;

WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that approximately 11.5 million people in the United States misused prescription opioids; and

WHEREAS, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports that many people who become addicted to opioids go on to abuse heroin; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 80 percent of heroin users reported using prescription opioids prior to heroin; and;

WHEREAS, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, New Jersey's opioid-related overdose death rate of 16 deaths per 100,000 persons was higher than the national rate; and;

WHEREAS, New Jersey's per capita rate of 8.3 heroin-related deaths per 100,000 is more than triple the national rate; and

WHEREAS, "Black Balloon Day" is dedicated to remembering not only those lost to drug addiction but also the friends and families of those affected by the epidemic; and

WHEREAS, On "Black Balloon Day," individuals and organizations across the country display a black balloon outside of their homes and businesses and in the community as a sign they have been affected by drug addiction or an overdose death; and

WHEREAS, "Black Balloon Day" has become a national and international event aimed at bringing awareness to drug overdose deaths and paying tribute to individuals who have lost their lives to opioid addiction and;

WHEREAS, The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a proclamation recognizing March 6 as "Black Balloon Day" in New Jersey, and call upon public officials and the citizens of this State to observe the day with appropriate activities and programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Michael Putrino, on behalf of Phil Murphy, Governor of the Great State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim

MARCH 6, 2020

BLACK BALLOON DAY

In New Milford and encourage public officials, residents and businesses to honor this observance with appropriate activities and programs.
