



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 21-2087, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF KATE (CATHERINE ELLEN) MAHONEY

WHEREAS, Kate Mahoney, an Evanston resident and long-time advocate for mental health services and overcoming the stigma of mental health illness and treatment, died on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 after a long illness; and

WHEREAS, Kate was born in 1959 and is survived by her siblings Steve Mahoney (Sally Swiss), Laura Mahoney, and Brian Mahoney (Dr. Kathleen Mahoney), and was cherished by her nephews Brendan Mahoney (deceased), Dr. Reid Mahoney, and Mark, Dylan, Clark and Colin Mahoney She earned her bachelor's degree in Sociology and Women's Studies from Northwestern University and completed her master's in Social Work at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor; and

WHEREAS, Kate worked at PEER Services for over 30 years, including 25 years as executive director. She built PEER Services into a robust organization that provides high-quality substance use prevention and treatment services to Evanston and neighboring communities across Northern Cook County. PEER Services opened in 1975 and provides community-based prevention and treatment services to residents of Evanston, Northfield, New Trier, Maine, and Niles Township, in addition to the north side of Chicago. Her pioneering work in youth prevention and her tireless fight against stigma made contributions locally and nationally, setting the standard for important work that continues to this day; and

WHEREAS, Maureen McDonnell, the current executive director of PEER Services wrote, "I met Kate when we were both advocating for more resources for community substance use disorder treatment through the Illinois Association for Behavioral Health. Her deep understanding of recovery and the ways that community services support recovery helped a generation of leaders learn, grow, and do better."; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, Kate was selected as the new executive director of The Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute for Mental Health Education (NRCI) at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. NRCI works to overcome the stigma of mental illness by offering mental health education, trainings, and presentations to the greater Chicagoland community and by supporting organizations engaged in mental illness research, education, self-help, anti-discrimination and advocacy. On accepting the appointment, Kate said, "I am inspired by the words of The Chicago School President Michele Nealon-Woods, when she stated 'there is no health without mental health.' This will be my mantra as I work to carry out the mission of NRCI,"; and

WHEREAS, Tiffany Masson, Psy.D., campus dean of the Chicago Campus of The Chicago School commented, "Kate Mahoney is the perfect choice for the role of executive director. She has spent her career being a vocal advocate for reducing the stigma that for too long has prevented individuals impacted by mental illness from accessing mental health services. She has been lauded for her numerous contributions to the fields of mental and behavioral health, and I'm excited to be working with her;" and

WHEREAS, Kate served on many boards throughout her life and career: Evanston Mayor's Mental Health Committee, 2020 to present; American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence, Board Member 2008 to 2017; Illinois Association for Medication Assisted Addiction Treatment, President 2008 to 2017; Illinois Association for Behavioral Health, President 2004 to 2006, Vice President 2000 to 2004, Board Member 1990 to 2017; Mental Health America, North Shore, Board Member 2012 to Present; Serenity Academy Chicago, Board Member 2012 to Present; CEDA/Neighbors at Work, Board Member 1990 to 1992;

BEHIV (Better Existence with HIV), Founding Board Member 1989 to 1991; and Fairygodmother Foundation, Founding

Board Member 1998 to 2000; and

WHEREAS, Kate is the recipient of numerous awards and honors: Judy Miller Memorial Award in 1999 from the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association for excellence in service delivery and advocacy in the field of medication assisted treatment for opioid dependence; Black History Month Salute to Evanston's Women in Human Services in 1999 by the City of Evanston for Leadership in Human Services; Executive Director of the Year Nominee in 2001 from the United Way of Suburban Chicago; George Schwab Distinguished Service Award in 2006 from The Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association for leadership and expertise in the development of public policy to advance the substance abuse treatment field in Illinois; Community Service Award in 2010 from Mental Health America of the North Shore for leadership in mental health service and advocacy; Dole/Nyswander Award in 2013 from The American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence for outstanding treatment and advocacy on behalf of individuals and families impacted by heroin or other opioid dependence; and the George Goodman & Ruth P. Brudney Social Work Award in 2017 from Mental Health America-National for excellence in service delivery and advocacy in the field of medication assisted treatment for opioid dependence; and

WHEREAS, in nominating Kate for the 2021 "Unsung Heroine" Award, Josefina Alvarez wrote, "Kate dedicates an amazing number of hours to volunteering and makes constructive contributions to numerous organizations and groups. She brings great energy, wisdom and interest in community service to several community organizations, currently serving on two boards and the City of Evanston Task Force on mental health, founded in response to COVID-19. She is an essential member of the board of Mental Health America of the North Shore, developing, leading and promoting programs, connecting us to others in the community and developing our board. Many people in the 13th District know and respect Kate for her dedication to community service;" and

WHEREAS, Kate's impact on society's changing attitudes toward mental health cannot be overstated. She will be missed by friends and colleagues alike.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors the life and contributions of **KATE MAHONEY**, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions she has made to the Citizens of Cook County, Illinois; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of same be tendered to the family of **KATE MAHONEY**.