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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Belize Observes World Mental Health Day 2020**

*Belmopan. October 9, 2020. 3:00 p.m.*

The Ministry of Health celebrates World Mental Health Day along with the global community under the theme “Mental Health for All - Greater Investment – Greater Access.”

Close to one billion people are living with a mental disorder, three million people die every year from the harmful use of alcohol, and one person dies every 40 seconds by suicide. Currently, billions of people around the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is having a further negative impact on their mental health.

According to the Director of Health Services, “Mental Health Day serves as an opportunity to keep the discussions around all mental health issues, particularly in COVID-19 times when these are at the forefront and can overwhelm health systems even more. Mental health is indeed for all and it does require greater investment from all as it is only through a collective approach that we will be able to keep ahead of the growing mental health issues that we have.”

Individuals are thus encouraged to take concrete actions in support of their own mental health and to support friends and family who are struggling. As employers, to take steps towards putting in place employee wellness programmes. As government, to commit to establishing or scaling-up mental health services. As journalists, to explain what more can and must be done to make mental health care a reality for everyone.

This year there will be a series of online activities to commemorate World Mental Health Day in lieu of in-person events that were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The plans include virtual media rounds as well as TikTok, poster and jingle competitions all designed to encourage the population to focus on their mental health during this time. The Mental Health Association has planned various activities to mark World Mental Health Day 2020 including a telethon on October 10, 2020 to raise funds to support the homeless.

The Ministry of Health strongly encourages the public to support the World Mental Health activities in your area.

**Ends**