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## Christie Administration Announces \$11.5 Million FEMA Grant to Continue Post-Sandy Crisis Counseling for Affected New Jerseyans

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Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

### *Federal Funds Will Expand New Jersey Hope and Healing Program*

**Trenton, NJ** – The Christie Administration announced today that New Jersey has received an \$11.5 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which will allow the Department of Human Services (DHS) to expand the New Jersey Hope and Healing Program and continue to provide crisis counseling and outreach services to survivors of Superstorm Sandy.

The federal grant will fund ongoing efforts by the Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) Disaster and Terrorism Branch, and its partners, to help Sandy survivors cope with the emotional challenges associated with loss or displacement. Through a special certification system, more than 700 volunteers throughout the state have been trained to provide immediate emotional support after a disaster.

"Disasters like Sandy damage more than just property – for many the sense of loss, helplessness and hopelessness is unshakable," said DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez. "Restoring survivors' emotional and psychological balance is a fundamental factor in New Jersey's rebuilding process."

The FEMA grant will allow DMHAS and its New Jersey Hope and Healing partners – the Mental Health Association in New Jersey, Barnabas Health Institute for Prevention, Family Service Association in Atlantic, and Family Service Bureau of Newark – to continue providing community outreach, emotional support, crisis counseling, and referral services.

"The extensive physical damage from the rare superstorm was immediately evident, with storm-beaten homes, buildings and scattered debris featured extensively in national and international media," said Adrienne Fessler Belli, Director of DHS' Disaster and Terrorism Branch within DMHAS. "Less evident, but no less significant, was the emotional impact and distress that such a traumatic event can create."

Research shows that feelings of anxiety and depression can increase as people try to recover from a disaster. Outreach and support efforts aim to promote resilience through use of good support systems and coping techniques, including sharing your feelings, maintaining your routine, seeking professional advice, and limiting exposure to news about the event.

Prior to this new grant, New Jersey received \$4 million from FEMA to launch the Hope and Healing Program. To date, more than 150,000 residents have received counseling and outreach services.

In addition to supporting Hope and Healing of New Jersey, DMHAS has also awarded a \$54,498 grant to the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's University Behavioral HealthCare (UBHC) to provide emergency mobile and telephonic behavioral health counseling to Sandy survivors.

The New Jersey Hope and Healing program helpline can be reached at 1 (877) 294-HELP (4357) with TTY availability at 1 (877) 294-4356, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday for people recovering from Sandy's emotional impact.

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