After the storm there is more than structural damage

BY ERIC AVEDISSIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — When disasters strike, the aftereffects are more than structural damage to homes or property. The mental anguish and trauma left by events such as Hurricane Sandy and the Great Hurricane of 1910, and have long-term consequences.

The Richard Stockton State College hosted a symposium Saturday, March 23, in the Richard Stockton Institute of Technology on the “Aftermath of Disaster.” It was sponsored by PerforMedCare.

Former U.S. Congressman Patrick Kennedy (D-Ri), was the keynote speaker. Kennedy, who served 16 years in the House of Representatives and was the lead sponsor of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, is currently the executive director of the2/3 Leadership Alliance in Nashville, Tenn.

Kennedy said 2/3 of people who have physical health insurance will never receive care for mental health because of stigma surrounding mental illness.

Kennedy added the issue of mental health is “not a political issue,” but about “real people.”

“Those barriers are not a matter of choice for these people. They’re the physical result of altered brain chemistry. As real as you can treat something like cancer or asthma or diabetes, we cannot think of one person who said, ‘I don’t want to be,’ Kennedy said.

“Somebody nothing more than a condition, but is a disease. As real as you can treat cancer or diabetes, there are some diseases, and the results can be devastating,” Kennedy said.

Kennedy said “We are obsessed by the physical health of Hurricane Sandy victims. Some 18 veterans commit suicide every day because of their mental health concerns and stigma surrounding them.

“The storm we develop to treat the mental health care of those in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, that system of care will not only help our immediate family and friends, but our friends and family members, here in southern Jersey, it is also helping to our American society surrounding mental illness.

Kennedy challenged attendees to vote to end the trauma suffered by south Jersey residents after Sandy, but examine treating the whole person for psychiatric diseases.

“Those barriers are not a matter of choice for these people. They’re the physical result of altered brain chemistry. As real as you can treat something like cancer or asthma or diabetes, we cannot think of one person who said, ‘I don’t want to be,’ Kennedy said.

“Somebody nothing more than a condition, but is a disease. As real as you can treat cancer or diabetes, there are some diseases, and the results can be devastating,” Kennedy said.

Kennedy said “We are obsessed by the physical health of Hurricane Sandy victims. Some 18 veterans commit suicide every day because of their mental health concerns and stigma surrounding them.

“The storm we develop to treat the mental health care of those in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, that system of care will not only help our immediate family and friends, but our friends and family members, here in southern Jersey, it is also helping to our American society surrounding mental illness.

Kennedy challenged attendees to vote to end the trauma suffered by south Jersey residents after Sandy, but examine treating the whole person for psychiatric diseases.

“Those barriers are not a matter of choice for these people. They’re the physical result of altered brain chemistry. As real as you can treat something like cancer or asthma or diabetes, we cannot think of one person who said, ‘I don’t want to be,’ Kennedy said.

“Somebody nothing more than a condition, but is a disease. As real as you can treat cancer or diabetes, there are some diseases, and the results can be devastating,” Kennedy said.

Kennedy said “We are obsessed by the physical health of Hurricane Sandy victims. Some 18 veterans commit suicide every day because of their mental health concerns and stigma surrounding them.

“The storm we develop to treat the mental health care of those in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, that system of care will not only help our immediate family and friends, but our friends and family members, here in southern Jersey, it is also helping to our American society surrounding mental illness.

Kennedy challenged attendees to vote to end the trauma suffered by south Jersey residents after Sandy, but examine treating the whole person for psychiatric diseases.