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South Carolina Observes Mental Health Month

Columbia, SC – Recognizing South Carolinians who are living with a mental illness, the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) joins the nation in commemorating May as Mental Health Month.

Each year, the SCDMH, mental health advocacy groups, churches, schools and civic organizations strive to raise awareness about mental health, challenge South Carolinians to consider their views toward mental illness, respect those who live with these medical disorders, and fight the stigma that too often prevents people in need from seeking help. SC Governor Henry McMaster has issued a proclamation declaring May as Mental Health Month.

“At the Department of Mental Health we strive to find new and innovative ways to help those who live with mental illness,” said SCDMH State Director John H. Magill. “From the expansion of our award winning Telepsychiatry and School-based Services programs to our on-the-ground response to the Townville tragedy last autumn, we are dedicated to early intervention, improved access, providing ongoing support, and fighting stigma.”

“In addition to our well-known blue ribbon programs, the Agency has launched several important grant-funded programs to assist our neighbors in need,” said Agency Spokesman Deputy Director Mark Binkley. “Our Youth Suicide Prevention Program, *The South Carolina Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative*, is reaching young people between the ages of 10 and 24, while our Cooperative Agreement to Benefit Homeless Individuals’ is assisting folks who are chronically homeless and have serious mental illnesses, including veterans.”

SCDMH and many non-profit organizations will hold public events to mark Mental Health Month. For a calendar of these activities, view the Agency’s Mental Health Month toolkit, at www.scdmh.org. To find Mental Health Month screenings or events in your area, discover ways you can help raise awareness during Mental Health Month, request a speaker on Mental Health topics, or learn more about the programs and services offered by the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, call (800) 763-1024 or visit www.scdmh.org.

The [South Carolina Department of Mental Health’s](http://www.scdmh.org) mission is to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses, giving priority to adults with serious and persistent mental illness and to children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances. The Agency serves approximately 100,000 citizens with mental illnesses, approximately 30,000 of whom are children and adolescents, and provides outpatient services through a network of seventeen community mental health centers and numerous clinics. It also operates four hospitals, one community nursing care center, and three veterans’ nursing homes.

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