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Efforts Surrounding *Prevention Week in Alabama* Include Events & Public Education

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley recently proclaimed May 12-18 as Prevention Week in Alabama, coinciding with the National Prevention Week observance. Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, NPW is dedicated to increasing awareness of, and action around, substance abuse and mental health issues. It serves to promote prevention efforts, provide education about behavioral health and strengthen community partnerships.

This year's theme, "*Your voice. Your choice. Make a difference.*," emphasizes that the prevention of substance abuse and promotion of mental health starts with the choices people make in their own lives.

Dr. Maranda Brown, director of the Office of Prevention Services in ADMH's Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, says, "The Office of Prevention Services is extremely excited to celebrate the 2nd annual NPW observance. Each of us truly has an opportunity to use our voice and our message to create the communities we desire to live and thrive in."

Substance abuse treatment providers around the state are hosting health fairs, poster contests and other activities to celebrate the observance. Teens and providers alike are participating in the "*I Choose*" project, inviting them to take photos of themselves holding signs with statements about why they choose prevention. ADMH will share some of these photos during Prevention Week on their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ALMentalHealth. ADMH is also encouraging Alabamians to visit SAMHSA's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/samhsa to take the "Prevention Pledge," which inspires people to commit to a healthy lifestyle free of substance abuse and share their promise with family, friends and loved ones to help raise awareness.

Each day during National Prevention Week will highlight the following themes:

- Sunday, May 12 – Prevention & Cessation of Tobacco Use (*New for 2013*)
- Monday, May 13 – Prevention of Underage Drinking
- Tuesday, May 14 – Prevention of Prescription Drug Abuse & Illicit Drug Use
- Wednesday, May 15 – Prevention of Alcohol Abuse
- Thursday, May 16 – Suicide Prevention
- Friday, May 17 – Promotion of Mental, Emotional & Behavioral Well Being

Statistics from a recent National Survey on Drug Use & Health underline the need for prevention efforts:

- Excessive alcohol use is a leading cause of preventable death in the United States among all adult age groups, contributing to more than 79,000 deaths per year
- Six million children (9 percent) live with at least one parent who abuses alcohol or other drugs

(more)

- Injection drug use accounts for approximately 16 percent of new HIV infections in the U.S.
- In a typical month, approximately 5.3 million Americans use a prescription pain reliever for nonmedical reasons
- Drugs other than alcohol are detected in about 18 percent of motor vehicle driver deaths
- Rates of marijuana use by youth and young adults are on the rise, and fewer youth perceive great risk from smoking marijuana once or twice a week

Other resources that support prevention and promote mental, emotional and behavioral well being can be found on SAMHSA's website at www.samhsa.gov/preventionweek/resources.aspx.

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RESOURCES

To learn more about prevention services and/or Prevention Week activities in Alabama, contact the Alabama Department of Mental Health at 334-242-3417 or visit www.mh.alabama.gov.

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