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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 28, 2009

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**SEPTEMBER MARKS THE 20TH ANNUAL NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND
DRUG ADDICTION RECOVERY MONTH**

Activities will be held statewide to mark this observance

MONTGOMERY – More than 23 million people aged 12 or older needed treatment for a substance use disorder in the United States in 2007, and in Alabama alone, there are an estimated 300,000 people with some form of a substance use disorder. Many people do not understand that addiction is a treatable disease, and this misconception can keep people from getting help. In 2007, as many as 20.8 million people nationwide needed but did not receive treatment at a specialty facility.

To help alleviate this disparity and overcome barriers to long-term recovery, several events will be held statewide throughout the month of September as part of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month's (Recovery Month) 20th anniversary. The theme of this year's Recovery Month is "Join the Voices of Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal." For 20 years, Recovery Month, supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration through its Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, has celebrated people in recovery from addiction and the treatment providers who help them.

Recovery Month also serves to educate the public on substance abuse as a national health crisis, that addiction is a treatable disease, and that recovery is possible. Recovery Month highlights the benefits of treatment for not only the affected individual, but for their family, friends, workplace, and society as a whole. Educating the public reduces the stigma associated with addiction and treatment. Accurate knowledge of the disease helps people to understand the importance of supporting treatment programs, those who work within the treatment field, and those in need of treatment.

In preparation for Recovery Month, the department's Division of Substance Abuse Services and several advocacy groups have been busy coordinating events to celebrate this observance. A Recovery Breakfast in Mobile will kick off the month's celebrations on September 1. On September 11 and 12, 5K Sobriety Runs will be held in Montgomery and Birmingham, respectively. September 19 will see a Recovery Rally taking place in Birmingham which always attracts a big crowd. Finally, on September 20, Celebrate Recovery Sunday will take place in Montgomery. This event features national and local guest speakers in addition to special worship performances to collaborate with the faith-based community to encourage individuals seeking recovery.

Kent Hunt, Associate Commissioner for the Division of Substance Abuse Services, said that, "Alabamians will have the opportunity to participate in events emphasizing the reality that thousands of Alabama citizens are enjoying lives in recovery from substance addiction. All the events will be fun, uplifting, inspiring and educational. I encourage everyone to find an event to participate in because the more we learn about the possibilities and realities of addiction recovery, the more likely we will be to seek recovery for ourselves or to help guide someone else toward recovery."

To find out more about these Recovery Month events, visit the department's Web site at www.mh.alabama.gov, or contact the Division of Substance Abuse Services, Office of Advocacy and Outreach Services at 334- 242-3961. More information about national Recovery Month can be found at www.recoverymonth.gov.

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RESOURCES

Information about Recovery Month events or substance abuse services in the state of Alabama can be obtained by contacting ADMH's Division of Substance Abuse Services at (334)242-3961 or by visiting www.mh.alabama.gov.

For more information on National Recovery Month, visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Recovery Month Web site at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov/>.