

Up to the Minute

OACBHA UPDATE

July 2, 2009

CHC Calls for Leadership on State Budget

Today, the Coalition for Healthy Communities called on Governor Strickland and the Members of the Ohio Senate and the House of Representatives to do the right thing and find the resources to fund critical, life saving services for individuals with mental illness and alcohol and drug addiction.

“Our state leaders are playing with people’s lives. Individuals with serious mental illness and addiction disorders are being placed in the middle of partisan politics, and the lives of some of Ohio’s most vulnerable are hanging in the balance,” said Jim Mauro, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio (NAMI Ohio).

“The framework proposed by the Governor will decimate the behavioral health system of care. We need real leadership from Democrats and Republicans alike to resolve this issue. The system of care has been underfunded for the past decade, and now in this economic crisis with more people than ever needing our services, behavioral health must be fully funded,” said Cheri Walter, CEO of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities.

“The tragedy of this whole mess is that we are finally seeing progress being made on health care reform, but that will mean little if our alcohol, drug addiction and mental health system of care is dismantled. And make no mistake, it will be if our elected leaders cannot reach an understanding on how to appropriately fund these services,” said Hubert Wirtz, CEO of the Ohio Council on Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers. “Health care reform or not, people with behavioral health disorders will have nowhere to go for services in Ohio.”

The Coalition for Healthy Communities is a consortium of 27 statewide organizations advocating for quality mental health and addiction services.

LET THE FREEDOM TO RECOVER, RING ACROSS OHIO!!

Remember to keep the advocacy going through this holiday weekend.

1. Organize a group of recovery advocates to make signs to hold during holiday parades. Signs should say: INVEST WISELY! Fund Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services; \$1 Spent on Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services Saves \$11 Tax Dollars; and Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services SAVE LIVES!!
2. Let people know you’re there! Be loud and make sure any public officials, especially legislators, see your signs and hear your chants.
3. Have one of your group take video (AVI files or QuickTime for Macs) and/or photos (jpegs). Not a lot; just a couple minutes or 5-6 photos will do.
4. Get video of people explaining why Ohio should fund Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services and what will happen if the services are cut. Short “soundbite” comments are best.
5. Email the pictures and video to this email address: sfrohnappel@oacbha.org.
6. NOTE: When possible, include people’s names and hometowns in the email.
7. **SPECIAL NOTE: We need the video and photos NO LATER THAN MONDAY, JULY 6th.**

For more information about behavioral health issues in Ohio please visit:

www.oacbha.org

To remove your name from our mailing list or for questions or comments, please e-mail kthomas@oacbha.org