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SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH: CELEBRATING CONNECTIONS

Families and Communities Can Make a Difference

This September marks the 31st annual “National Recovery Month,” a period in which families and communities can find hope and spread the message that recovery works. This year’s theme of “Celebrating Connections” promotes awareness that families and communities are an important part of providing the support and services needed to help those recovering from mental health and substance use disorders.

Mental and substance use disorders affect people of all ethnicities, ages, genders, geographic regions and socioeconomic levels, noted Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Commissioner Carrie Slatton-Hodges. “Individuals struggling with these challenges can get better, both physically and emotionally, with the support of a welcoming community. We all need to help others from all walks of life know that help is available.”

This year, the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services is honoring Recovery Month by launching its new “Network of Care Service Directory.” This comprehensive directory of services will help Oklahomans quickly identify local programs and resources, and make informed choices about what they need to achieve recovery. To access real-time resources and programs near you, go to www.oklahoma.networkofcare.org/mh.

“Oftentimes, individuals who experience a mental or substance use disorder feel isolated and alone,” said Slatton-Hodges. “Yet, every year, millions of Americans experience the same thing. Mental health and substance use disorders can be prevented and treated, just like other health problems.

“Those who embrace recovery typically achieve improved mental and physical health and form stronger relationships with their neighbors, family members and peers,” she added. “We need to make more people believe recovery is possible, because it is.”

Slatton-Hodges said families and communities can support those in recovery by creating environments and relationships that promote acceptance. Support from families, especially, is essential, so it’s important that family members have the tools to start conversations about prevention, treatment and recovery.

The “Network of Care Service Directory” is just one of many resources available to help Oklahomans find services that work. Free, confidential assistance is available 24 hours a day for people in distress or their loved ones by calling 1-800-273-8255. Links to services related to COVID or everyday struggles can be found by calling the Reachout Hotline at 800-522-9054, or simply by dialing 211. You can call any of the statewide network of community mental health centers, visit with your primary care physician or talk to local faith leaders. All are ways to start the process of seeking wellness.

“Thousands of Oklahomans access these needed services every year,” she said. “As a result, they are able to return to work, their families, and turn their lives around for the better.”

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