



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2019

Department of Human Services Advocates for Acceptance and Open Dialogue Around Mental Health

Harrisburg, PA — Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Teresa Miller and Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine today marked Mental Health Awareness Month alongside members of the General Assembly, the PA System of Care Partnership, and other mental health advocates to raise awareness and understanding of mental illness and promote acceptance, compassion, and openness.

"Mental illness is not always visible, but it affects Pennsylvanians from all walks of life. This invisibility can make people feel isolated and unable to share their experiences," said Secretary Miller. "Only about half of people impacted by mental illness seek treatment, and too many people struggle in silence. If you live with a mental illness, please know that your feelings are valid. You are not limited by any challenges you face. Your experiences make you strong, but when you need them, help and support are available."

"It is important that all Pennsylvanians understand it is okay to admit they are struggling mentally," Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. "Everyone, from teens struggling to mentally process issues at school to seniors struggling with aging concerns, should have access to resources they need to help them through any difficult time. We will continue to work to provide help and resources to all residents to address their physical, mental and emotional well-being."

DHS' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (OMHSAS) supports individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders by offering behavioral health programs that promote growth, recovery, cultural competency, and inclusion in the community. OMHSAS works with county mental health and drug and alcohol offices and Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations to enable Pennsylvanians to access treatment and related services and supports, and live freely in recovery. OMHSAS also works to promote understanding and acceptance to reduce stigma around mental health and addiction.

Secretary Miller also awarded the second Dennis Marion Impact Award to Jonathan Rubin, director of Bucks County's Division of Housing and Human Services. The Dennis Marion Impact Award was established in 2017 by DHS and behavioral health stakeholders in honor of Dennis

Marion's commitment to public service throughout his distinguished career. Dennis served Cumberland County and Pennsylvania for 31 years in various positions, including Deputy Secretary for OMHSAS from 2013 to 2017. He passed away unexpectedly on March 29, 2017.

The award recognizes Marion's outstanding commitment, leadership, and achievement while serving state and local government, encouraging the highest standards of performance in Pennsylvania's public sector and highlighting public awareness of the value of public service.

"This award honors Dennis' impact in the behavioral health field. Dennis touched the lives of so many people, and this is an opportunity to honor public servants who have the same commitment and drive to better the lives of people throughout the commonwealth," said Secretary Miller. "Jonathan Rubin has helped vulnerable populations in Bucks County and Pennsylvania for nearly 30 years, and we are grateful for his leadership and dedication to bettering lives through behavioral health and human services programs."

Governor Tom Wolf's proposed 2019-2020 budget includes investments in community-based mental health services. It provides \$2.8 million to support the Community Hospital Integrated Projects Program (CHIPP). CHIPP links community programs to the state hospital system to move persons who no longer require inpatient psychiatric treatment to more appropriate community-based programs. CHIPP has enabled 3,551 people to move from state hospitals to community programs since 1991. This proposed funding will help an additional 45 people live safely and receive appropriate services in the community.

For more information on mental health services in Pennsylvania, visit www.dhs.pa.gov.

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