

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Addressing Mental Health #B4Stage4

This May is Mental Health Month

Eau Claire, WI May 14, 2015— This year’s theme for Mental Health Month—Addressing mental health before Stage 4—calls attention to the importance of addressing mental health symptoms early, identifying potential underlying diseases, and planning an appropriate course of action on a path towards overall health. Mental health conditions should be treated long before they reach the most critical points in the disease process—before Stage 4 when symptoms are more severe, persistent, and have jeopardized one’s life.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2015



B4Stage4
 Changing the Way We Think
 About Mental Health

“When we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don’t wait years to treat them,” said Lieske Giese, Health Officer/Director of the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. “We start before Stage 4—we begin with prevention. So why don’t we do the same for individuals who are dealing with potentially serious mental illness?”

Stages of Mental Health Conditions	
Stage 1	Mild symptoms and warning sign
Stage 2	Symptoms increase in frequency and severity and interfere with life activities and roles
Stage 3	Symptoms worsen with relapsing and recurring episodes accomplished by serious disruption in life activities and roles
Stage 4	Symptoms are persistent and severe and have jeopardized one’s life

A focus on primary prevention strategies can help increase awareness of the importance of being mentally well. It is also important to know the warning signs and how to take action so that mental illnesses can be caught early and treated, before it interferes with people’s everyday lives (such as effecting ability to focus in school or work or in friend and social networks).

Mental Health was the top identified health priority in Eau Claire County in the 2015 Community Health Assessment. The community health assessment survey showed that 60% of Eau Claire County residents feel that mental health is a moderate or major problem in our community. 91% of survey respondents said the top reason that mental health is a problem in our community is because people do not feel comfortable seeking care for mental illness due to the stigma attached with mental health. Eau Claire County adults 18 years and older report an average of 2 mentally unhealthy days per month. Figures are based on the BRFSS question "Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?"

During Mental Health Month, we are encouraging everyone to:

- Stay positive. Take time to relax. Balance work, home, and play to manage stress.
- Learn the warning signs of mental illness. Often times, family and friends are the first to support a person through these early stages.
- Take a screening to learn about your mental health at www.mhascreening.org
- Ask for help if needed to address mental health symptoms early.
- Attend a local Question, Persuade, Refer(QPR) Training for Suicide Prevention. Suicide prevention is everyone's business. The trainings will allow community members to learn more about warning signs of suicide and how to assist a person at risk. If you would like to attend a training, call Chelsie at 715-839-4766 or email her at Chelsalyn.Smith@co.eau-claire.wi.us for more information.

For more information, visit Mental Health America's website at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/may. View the infographic created for Mental Health Month at <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/infographic-b4stage4-changing-way-we-think-about-mental-health>.

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