

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mental Health Awareness**

**Eau Claire, WI –August 12, 2014-** The death of Robin Williams is a sobering reminder of the many Americans suffering from Mental Illness. In Wisconsin, 1 in 5 persons are affected by mental health issues each year.

“Mental health is integral to our overall health,” said Lieske Giese, Director/Health Officer of Eau Claire City-County Health Department. “We need to care for our mental health so we can better respond to the stress of daily life and the challenges it presents.

There are times when the day-to-day activities and stress is too much for an individual to manage on their own. Some people seek appropriate help and some self-medicate through alcohol and other drugs. Some individuals with mental health issues may attempt suicide or commit suicide.

- Eau Claire County experienced 15 suicides in 2013.
- Suicide is the 15<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States with one death occurring on average every 40 seconds.
- Eau Claire has a higher rate of suicide attempts than some other neighboring counties.

As the nation reflects on recent events, it is important to be reminded of some of the warning signs that a person may be considering suicide.

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities – seemingly without thinking
- Withdrawing from friends, family and society
- Feeling hopeless, trapped, anxious agitated or unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life.

Recognizing these signs and reaching out can make an enormous difference. If you or anyone you know is showing any of these signs seek help as soon as possible:

- For information, screening, and referral: Northwest Connections Crisis Line at **1-888-552-6642**, available 24-hours per day, 7-days per week.
- For Peer Support: The Wellness Shack at 715-855-7705
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK or online.

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