



For Immediate Release

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QCHI Celebrates May as National Mental Health Month

The Quad City Health Initiative's *QC Hearts and Minds: Building Bridges* team is celebrating May as National Mental Health Month. The team includes representatives from 56 organizations across our community who are working to increase awareness of mental health issues. The team is joined in its efforts by the City of Davenport and the City of Moline, which have each issued proclamations declaring May as Mental Health Month.

During Mental Health Month, area churches will host Mental Health Sundays each week (except Mother's Day May 10th) to raise awareness and to encourage individuals who may suffer from a mental illness to seek help. The theme of Mental Health Sundays is "*help is available and recovery is possible*". Discussion will focus on six key messages created by the Public Awareness workgroup of the QC Hearts and Minds Team: 1) Mental Illness is Physical; 2) Mental Illness Doesn't Discriminate; 3) Mental Illness is Treatable; 4) Diagnosis of Mental Illness is Growing among Children; 5) Denial and Stigma Shut Out Recovery; and 6) Untreated Mental Illness Shatters Lives. The QC Hearts and Minds team has created a poster with these messages that will be displayed in area churches throughout the year. QCHI acknowledges the support of the Vera French Foundation and Printer's Mark in producing the posters.

On Sunday, May 3rd, two churches will be featured congregations for Mental Health Sunday. Rev. Swartz at Church of Peace in Rock Island and Rev. Smith at Temple Baptist in Davenport extend an invitation to local media to attend their services and speak with their congregants about mental health issues. Rev. Swartz says, "It is important to talk openly and directly about mental health issues in church in order to address the stigma attached and help people feel comfortable to seek the help they may need. If mental illness affects 1 in 4 families, there are probably many within every congregation who need support. The reality is this issue affects everyone."

On May 17th, St Paul's Lutheran in Davenport and Broadway Presbyterian in Moline will be featured churches and also extend an open invitation to the local media. We encourage other churches that would like to participate and be featured on May 24th and May 31st to contact the QCHI office.

The QC Hearts and Minds: Building Bridges team was created in June 2008 by the Quad City Health Initiative to 1) Increase the community's understanding of mental health and thus reduce the stigma associated with mental health care; 2) Preserve and increase access to care for the mentally ill; and 3) Promote mental health as integral to our overall health and well-being.

The Quad City Health Initiative (QCHI) is a community partnership that works to create a healthy community. The Initiative raises awareness of health issues, encourages or creates projects to address gaps in health services and fosters community collaboration in all aspects of health. Major financial sponsors of the Initiative are Trinity Regional Health System and Genesis Health System. Additional financial support is provided in 2009 by Alcoa, McLaughlin Family Foundation, Orthopaedic and Rheumatology Associates and QCHI Board Members. For more information or to join the efforts of the Quad City Health Initiative, please call 563-421-2826 or visit our website at www.qchealthinitiative.org.

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