

Early Identification and Treatment Are Essential to Address Children's Mental Health Challenges

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is May 5-11, 2013

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, about 20 percent of children have diagnosable mental illnesses during any given year, and nearly 5 million American children and adolescents suffer from serious mental illnesses, which significantly interfere with their daily lives. In addition, nearly 20 percent of young adults, aged 18 to 25 years, had mental health conditions in the past year, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Of these individuals, more than 1.3 million had serious disorders that significantly impaired their ability to function.

"It is critical to know the signs of mental illnesses and seek help as soon as possible. Early identification and treatment greatly increase youths' likelihood of possibly recovering from mental illnesses or, if not recovering, then successfully managing symptoms so they can live healthier and more successful lives," said Debra L. Wentz, Ph.D., CEO of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA). "Without treatment, mental illnesses could become more severe and could lead to substance abuse and self-destructive behaviors, possibly resulting in suicide. In addition, untreated mental disorders are likely to continue into adulthood and interfere with educational and employment pursuits, relationships and many other aspects of life."

Visit www.njamhaa.org for more details and examples of the many success stories that NJAMHAA member providers make possible. This particular article features CarePlus NJ, Mount Carmel Guild Behavioral Health System, Youth Consultation Service, FAMILYConnections, NewBridge Services, and Family and Communities Together.

We are eager to share more stories of successes that children and adults have achieved as a result of receiving services from NJAMHAA members! All of our members' inspiring and amazing work should be highlighted! Share details at any time! Contact Shauna at smoses@njamhaa.org. Thanks!