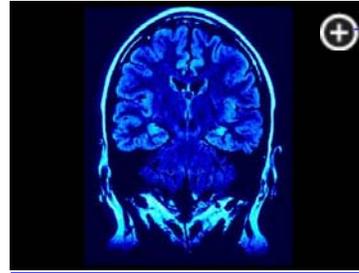


May is National Mental Health Month

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MONTGOMERY, AL - Each year, the Alabama Department of Mental Health joins statewide and national organizations to promote National Mental Health Month, which is observed in May. Throughout the month, various advocacy organizations will host events statewide, and ADMH will present its 7th annual Capitol Showcase Consumer Art Exhibition. The art show was moved to May this year to coincide with National Mental Health Month.



Hundreds of consumers around the state with mental illnesses, intellectual disabilities, and/or substance use disorders will showcase their artwork throughout the month at the Capitol. The art show is an excellent opportunity to promote consumer dignity and gain more understanding of the individuals ADMH serves. This exhibit is about more than just the artists' work.

They also have the opportunity to share their heartfelt testimonies about the obstacles they have overcome in their lives, why art is an important part of their recovery, and their own personal love of creating art. The exhibit can be viewed in the Old Supreme Court Library in the Capitol from May 1 to May 25. A reception will be held for artists, their friends and family members on Friday, May 25, at 1 p.m., also in the Old Supreme Court Library.

The individuals participating in the art show represent just a portion of the estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older – about one in four adults – who have a diagnosable mental illness in a given year. About six percent of American adults live with serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder. In Alabama, ADMH serves more than 100,000 people per year with serious mental illnesses through community contract providers and more than 3,000 people per year in state psychiatric hospitals. Although mental health disorders are common, they are also highly treatable with modern medication and care.

Dr. Tammy Peacock, associate commissioner for the Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services at ADMH says, "We want everyone to realize that like all illnesses, individuals with mental illnesses recover every day of the week. The stigma wrongly associated with mental illnesses often hinders people from seeking treatment at the early stages of the disease. Observances such as National Mental Health Month help reduce this stigma."

In 1949 Mental Health America (formerly the National Mental Health Association), a national advocacy organization with local affiliates in Alabama, launched Mental Health Week, which eventually became Mental Health Month. This year they hope to raise awareness of mental health and mental wellness through two themes. *Do More for 1 in 4* is a call to action to help the one in four American adults who live with a diagnosable, treatable mental health condition reach recovery. *Healing Trauma's Invisible Wounds* focuses on the impact of traumatic events on individuals and communities, and is particularly timely for those Alabamians affected by the April 2011 tornadoes and the recent one-year anniversary of the events. More information about these campaigns and National Mental Health Month can be found by visiting www.nmha.org/go/may.

For more information about ADMH's 7th annual Capitol Showcase Consumer Art Exhibition, please contact the Office of Public Information and Community Relations at 334-242-3417.

Information about mental health services in the state of Alabama can be obtained by contacting the Office of Public Information and Community Relations at 334-242-3417 or by visiting us online at www.mh.alabama.gov.

INFORMATION SOURCE: Alabama Department of Mental Health