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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
April 2, 2013

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## **ADMH Observes National Alcohol Awareness Month**

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Department of Mental Health is encouraging people to get the facts about alcohol abuse during National Alcohol Awareness Month, observed annually each April. Dr. Maranda Brown, director of prevention services in ADMH’s Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services says, “This observance provides an opportunity to raise awareness while aiming to reduce stigma associated with seeking help, and in turn encourage people to make healthy and safe choices.” Throughout the month, a host of events will be held statewide by substance abuse treatment providers, including town hall meetings, health fairs and fun nights, to mark this observance.

Nationally, more than 18 million individuals, or 8.5 percent of people, have alcohol use disorders, and 25 percent of children have been exposed to alcohol use disorders in their family. Likewise, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, alcohol continues to remain a problem in Alabama with 35.6 percent of youth in grades 9-12 consuming alcohol, close to the national average of 38.7 percent. Of equal concern is the fact that 9.9 percent of youth in grades 9-12 have reported driving after consuming an alcoholic beverage; higher than the national average of 8.2 percent.

Additionally, from 2009-2010, 249,000 Alabama adults were estimated to be alcohol dependent or alcohol abusers, while 236,000 were estimated to have needed treatment for alcohol use, but did not receive it. As far as treatment for alcohol abuse or use at state-funded or operated agencies, Dr. Brown states that, “During 2012, approximately 6,645 individual sought treatment, according to ADMH statistics. That number was down slightly compared to 7,000 individuals in 2011; however, alcohol remained the leading reason for treatment attempts both years. Statistics such as this are why education and prevention are critical to reducing alcohol-related problems and alcoholism.”

Alcohol Awareness Month was founded and has been sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence since 1987 to increase public awareness aimed at reducing the stigmas associated with alcoholism that too often prevents individuals and families from seeking help. This year, NCADD has chosen the theme “**Help for Today. Hope for Tomorrow.**,” which is designed to draw attention to the pervasive impact that alcohol use and alcoholism have on youth, families and communities.

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### **RESOURCES**

For more information about Alcohol Awareness Month or alcohol abuse, visit [www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org).

Information regarding substance abuse services in the state of Alabama can be found at ADMH’s website at [www.mh.alabama.gov](http://www.mh.alabama.gov), or by calling 334-242-3961.