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## **The Addiction Coalition Wins First-Ever Celebrate Recovery Challenge**

MONTGOMERY – The Addiction Coalition was chosen as the winner of the first-ever Celebrate Recovery Challenge. Its *Real People, Real Stories* online event was chosen by mental health stakeholders and the general public as the event that best embodied the purpose of Recovery Month by increasing awareness and decreasing stigma. Nearly 8,600 votes were cast in the inaugural challenge, hosted by ADMH as another component of Alabama's celebration of National Recovery Month. Dr. Beverly Bell-Shambley, associate commissioner for the Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, said, "We are proud to recognize the Addiction Coalition for winning the Celebrate Recovery Challenge. We also want to thank the other organizations who hosted events and entered, as well as everyone who voted, for making the Challenge a success."

*Real People, Real Stories* ran from September 1-30, with stories published on the Addiction Coalition's website at 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. each day. Stories were then shared via Facebook, Twitter and e-newsletters. A total of 60 individual written or video stories of recovery from substance use disorders and/or mental illnesses featured people from all walks of life. Accompanying each story was a link to the provider that helped them in the event others reading or watching were moved to seek help for themselves or others.

Organizations hosting Recovery Month events were encouraged to enter the Celebrate Recovery Challenge by submitting a description of their event and pictures from the event. Submissions were accepted the week of October 1-5. Along with the Addiction Coalition, other organizations that entered were: Aletheia House in Birmingham; Cahaba Mental Health Center & Cahaba CARES in Selma; The Drug Education Council, Faces & Voices of Recovery and NAMI-Mobile in Mobile; and SpectraCare Health Systems in Dothan.

Voting took place October 9 through October 14 at ADMH's website. Announcements were sent to a variety of mental health stakeholders and the general public via email, ADMH's website and its Facebook and Twitter pages. Organizations were also encouraged to spread the word about voting. As the winner of the Celebrate Recovery Challenge, the Addiction Coalition will be highlighted on the ADMH website for the next year. Staff from the Addiction Coalition will also receive a Certificate of Recognition from Governor Robert Bentley and have a commemorative picture taken with the Governor, ADMH Commissioner Jim Reddoch, and Bell-Shambley.

National Recovery Month is held annually during the month of September and seeks to promote the societal benefits of prevention, treatment, and recovery from mental illnesses and substance use disorders. Raising awareness is a crucial component of Recovery Month, and organizations throughout Alabama have traditionally hosted events statewide to celebrate the observance and help promote its message.

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### RESOURCES

For more information about the Celebrate Recovery Challenge and the Addiction Coalition's winning submission, visit ADMH's website at [www.mh.alabama.gov/CelebrateRecoveryChallengeInfo.aspx](http://www.mh.alabama.gov/CelebrateRecoveryChallengeInfo.aspx).