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**ORGANIZATIONS PARTNER AGAIN TO HOST TIMELY TRAINING ON
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS FOLLOWING TRAUMA**

MONTGOMERY – Ironically, as another round of deadly tornadoes hit Alabama last week, another timely training was scheduled to address the effects of trauma and natural disasters on the well-being and mental health of children. “Understanding Children’s Responses to Trauma and Natural Disasters” will take place this Wednesday, February 1, from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at Chilton-Shelby Mental Health Center’s Hamilton Center in Calera. The workshop will provide an overview of risk factors, responses, and coping skills for children that have survived a disaster. It will also provide tips for positive self-care for the professionals reaching out to help children.

More than 70 children’s therapists, counselors, social workers and Project Rebound counselors have registered for the workshop. Dr. Robin H. Gurwitsch, Ph.D., will facilitate the training. Dr. Gurwitsch is a professor and program coordinator of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. As program coordinator, Dr. Gurwitsch works to improve schools’ and other child-serving systems’ assistance to children affected by crisis and loss. She is a co-investigator with the Terrorism and Disaster Center of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and a member of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's cadre of experts on disaster mental health.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics are once again partnering to facilitate training on this subject. In the aftermath of last April’s deadly tornadoes, the organizations partnered in August to host a web-based training for pediatricians, family physicians and mental health professionals on the effects of trauma and stress on children. Steve Lafreniere, director of ADMH’s Office of Children’s Services, says, “The department is fortunate to have the opportunity, through a partnership with Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics, to again have a recognized expert in child trauma provide education and training to professionals who work with children and families that have been affected by the recent storms in Alabama. The knowledge and skills they will learn can help them assist children and families with the impact these traumatic events often have on children.”

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RESOURCES

Chilton-Shelby Mental Health Center’s Hamilton Center is located at 151 Hamilton Lane, Calera, 35040.

For more information about this training or mental health services for children, please contact ADMH’s Office of Public Information at 334-242-3417.