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**NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO RECOGNIZE
MENTAL HEALTH AS A VITAL PART OF OVERALL HEALTH**

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Department of Mental is encouraging men to seek out information about mental health as part of National Men's Health Week, which is being observed June 11-17 this year. National Men's Health Week is anchored by a Congressional health education program, and seeks to heighten awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. Dr. Tammy Peacock, associate commissioner for the Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services at ADMH says, "We want everyone to realize that like people with all types of 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 its early stages. Observances such as National Men's Health Week provide opportunities to remind Alabamians that mental health is a vital part of overall health and well being."

ADMH offers a useful educational resource on men's mental health called *The Legacy of Charley Pell*. This 17-minute documentary focuses on the life of Coach Charley Pell, his struggle with depression and his recovery from a mental illness. Essentially, it teaches that mental illness is not a sign of weakness, but a biological disease that is treatable and manageable. The national award-winning film has been a popular resource for combating the stigma against mental illness in high school and college students.

One in four adults – approximately 57.7 million Americans – experience a mental health disorder in any given year. One of the greatest mental health disorder threats to men is depression; more than 6 million American men suffer from depression. According to the Mayo Clinic, depression can affect men differently than it does women, and there are a number of reasons why male depression often goes unnoticed. When depression occurs in men, it may be more severe than in women and can be masked by unhealthy coping behavior. Further, according to the National Institute for Mental Health, more than four times as many men as women die by suicide in the United States each year, even though more women make suicide attempts during their lives. Men seem to attempt suicide using methods that are generally more lethal than those used by women.

Asking for help can be hard for men. They may not recognize depression symptoms or may downplay their feelings. Likewise, many may see depression as a weakness and are much less



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likely to seek treatment that may be life saving. However, depression is an illness with a greater success rate of recovery than all other major illnesses combined. That is why it is so important to take advantage of observances like National Men's Health Week to educate men about their mental health.

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RESOURCES

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.

Additional information regarding Coach Charley Pell can be found on ADMH's website under the Media Center tab or at <http://www.mh.alabama.gov/video/LegacyOfCharleyPell.aspx>.

Additional resources on men's mental health and general mental health can be found at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/> and <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>.