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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ADMH Leads Statewide Effort to Promote First Ever National Prevention Week

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Department of Mental Health wants to inform Alabamians about a new annual health observance – National Prevention Week. This new observance runs May 20-26, 2012, and is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Dr. Maranda Brown, director of the Office of Prevention Services in ADMH’s Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, says, “The Office of Prevention Services is extremely excited about this inaugural annual health observation. NPW sheds light on the efforts within our local communities that strive each day to advance the power of prevention. NPW endeavors to raise awareness about substance abuse and mental health issues while empowering individuals to commit to healthy lifestyles free of substance abuse. It is my hope that the NPW efforts around our state will further promote and advance mental, emotional and behavioral well-being.” Governor Bentley recently proclaimed May 20-26 Prevention Week in Alabama, and substance abuse treatment providers around the state are hosting health fairs, poster contests and other activities to celebrate the observance.

The National Prevention Week 2012 theme – *We are the ones. How are you taking action?* – touches on the small, everyday actions that contribute to healthier and more vibrant communities. Each weekday during National Prevention Week will highlight the following themes:

- Monday, May 21 – Prevention of Underage Drinking
- Tuesday, May 22 – Prevention of Prescription Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Use
- Wednesday, May 23 – Prevention of Alcohol Abuse
- Thursday, May 24 – Suicide Prevention
- Friday, May 25 – Promotion of Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Well-Being

National Prevention Week was scheduled near the start of summer because it is the perfect time for communities to come together and rally around prevention. Summer is a season filled with celebrations and recreational activities that can potentially be linked to substance use and abuse, such as graduation parties, proms, weddings, boating and camping excursions. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the percentages of marijuana, cigarette and alcohol initiates among youth increase between spring and summer. Other national statistics underline the need to continue prevention efforts:

- Excessive alcohol use is a leading cause of preventable death in the United States among all adult age groups, contributing to more than 79,000 deaths per year
- Six million children (9 percent) live with at least one parent who abuses alcohol or other drugs

(cont.)



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- Injection drug use accounts for approximately 16 percent of new HIV infections in the U.S.
- In a typical month, approximately 5.3 million Americans use a prescription pain reliever for nonmedical reasons
- Drugs other than alcohol are detected in about 18 percent of motor vehicle driver deaths
- Rates of marijuana use by youth and young adults are on the rise, and fewer youth perceive great risk from smoking marijuana once or twice a week

ADMH is also encouraging Alabamians to visit SAMHSA's Facebook page to take the "Prevention Pledge" and make a difference in their communities. The Prevention Pledge inspires people to commit to a healthy lifestyle free of substance abuse and then share their promise with friends, family and loved ones to help raise awareness. Other resources that support prevention and promote mental, emotional and behavioral well-being can also be on the Prevention Week section of SAMHSA's website at www.samhsa.gov/preventionweek/.

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RESOURCES

To learn more about prevention services and/or Prevention Week activities in Alabama, contact the Alabama Department of Mental Health at 334-242-3417 or visit www.mh.alabama.gov.