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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Alabama's Observance of 26th Annual National Recovery Month Celebration
Marked by Statewide Events and the Celebrate Recovery Challenge**

MONTGOMERY - Governor Bentley will soon proclaim September as Recovery Month in Alabama. National Recovery Month seeks to promote the societal benefits of prevention, treatment, and recovery from mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The observance celebrates people in recovery, lauds the contributions of treatment and service providers, and promotes the message that recovery is possible.

The most updated statistics (from 2011) reiterate how important it is to increase awareness and recovery efforts:

- 703,000 Alabamians ages 18 and over had mental illnesses, including 138,000 with serious mental illnesses;
- 37,000 Alabama youth and 229,000 adults ages 18 and over had at least one major depressive episode;
- 128,000 Alabamians ages 18 and over had serious thoughts of suicide;
- 304,000 Alabamians age 12 and over reported illicit drug use and 860,000 reported binge alcohol use in the month prior to being surveyed;
- 138,000 Alabamians ages 18 and over had alcohol dependence and 106,000 illicit drug dependence or abuse in the year prior to being surveyed;
- 332,000 Alabamians ages 12 and over needed but did not receive treatment for a substance use disorder in the year prior to being surveyed.

The Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, in partnership with several community providers and advocacy groups, has coordinated rallies, runs, open houses and many other events that will take place throughout the month. For information on these events, regularly visit the department's events calendar at

www.mh.alabama.gov/COPI/EventsCalendar.aspx#Sep15 or call the MHSA Division at 334-242-3961.

This year will also see the return of the 4th annual highly successful Celebrate Recovery Challenge. The Celebrate Recovery Challenge recognizes the best Recovery Month event in

Alabama, as chosen by the public. Last year, a collaboration between the Phoenix House, CBS 42, Bradford Health Services, Indian Rivers Mental Health Center, Self Recovery, North Harbor, University of Alabama Collegiate Recovery Community, Celebrate Recovery, FORMLL and Alabama Students About Services Recovery Community was chosen as the winner. This year's voting will be held October 13-19. More information about the Celebrate Recovery Challenge can be found on the department's website at www.mh.alabama.gov/celebraterecoverychallengeinfo.aspx, and the most updated information will be shared on the department's Facebook and Twitter pages.

In addition, MHSA has accepted "THE RECOVERY FACT-FIND CHALLENGE." Information related to aspects of recovery are shared with individuals throughout the state to increase awareness and reduce stigma. Once an individual receives the Fact-Find Challenge, they in turn challenge another individual to do the same. The MHSA Division encourages the state of Alabama to accept the challenge and speak up and speak out about recovery with family, friends, colleagues and communities.

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RESOURCES

For more information on National Recovery Month, visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Recovery Month website at www.recoverymonth.gov.

More info about the Recovery Month and the Celebrate Recovery Challenge will be announced on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ALMentalHealth and Twitter at www.twitter.com/ALMentalHealth.