



More Than A Thousand Set to Gather in Sacramento on May 13 for Inaugural Event to Show that Mental Health Matters

Sacramento, Calif. – May is Mental Health Month and on Tuesday, May 13 – Mental Health Matters Day – more than a thousand people from throughout the state and from various backgrounds will gather on the south lawn of California’s capitol building in Sacramento and give voice to the growing community of Californians who recognize that mental health is a critical issue for everyone, and that widespread wellness is only possible when fear and stigma are eliminated.

Each Mind Matters is a call to action embraced by thousands of individuals and organizations working together to eliminate stigma and increase awareness of opportunities to live mentally well. On May 13th Californians will be asked to show their support by wearing lime green, the color of the movement, and sharing messages and support online with tools available at www.EachMindMatters.org.

The event is scheduled to kick off at 11:00 a.m. and speakers will include pioneers of the mental health movement, and the policymakers that support the effort including Congresswoman Doris Matsui, Senate pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, California State Senator Jim Beall and Assemblyman Rocky Chavez. Several youth speakers will be featured including Amanda Lipp, a mental health advocate for NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) who will offer fresh perspectives on eliminating the stigma associated with mental illness.

"Stigma is perpetuated through the ways in which we *think* others view the mental health challenges we face and it’s a barrier to mental wellness because it stops people from reaching out for help when they need it," said Lipp. "On May 13th we will take pride in our journeys of struggle and success, and empower everyone to obliterate the very stigma that perpetuates those challenges we face."

California is a national leader in innovative strategies and services that promote mental wellness, a historic effort made possible by voter-approved Prop. 63. While greatly expanding access to services for people living with mental illness, Prop. 63 also dedicates resources to

keep individuals healthy so they don't reach the crisis point of our jails, hospitals, or homelessness. Prop. 63 puts a focus on reaching underserved communities so that every Californian has access to resources and services to attain mental wellness.

"When we passed Prop. 63 in 2004, mental health advocates envisioned the day when no one would be afraid to seek help for mental health challenges, and with the enthusiasm around Mental Health Matters Day we have come a long way toward ensuring every Californian living with a mental health challenge is able to thrive," said California Senate President pro Tempore and Prop. 63 author Darrell Steinberg. "Most inspiring are the young people who are stepping forward to demand an end to discrimination in housing, employment and education — because of their energy and passion, California's Mental Health Movement is coming alive in our classrooms, on our college campuses and online at www.eachmindmatters.org."

Significant improvements in mental health are also taking root at the national level with legislation expanding access to mental health services, authored by Congresswoman Matsui, a longtime mental health champion, signed into law by President Obama on April 1, 2014. H.R. 1263, the Excellence in Mental Health Act is the first piece of meaningful legislation to increase access to mental health services Congress has passed since the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008.

"The Excellence in Mental Health Act signed into law by the President is a historic step in expanding access to mental health services in communities across the nation," said Congresswoman Matsui (CA-06). "It is time for mental health to be treated on a level playing field with the rest of our nation's healthcare system. This is a significant step forward in achieving true parity between physical and mental health care, and will help community mental health centers expand their reach to all individuals in need of help."

The Mental Health Matters Day event in Sacramento will also feature educational interactive exhibits and live entertainment. A highpoint of the special occasion will be an Each Mind Matters walk on Capitol Mall, ending at Raley Field where the Sacramento River Cats will play the "Mental Health Matters" School Day baseball game against the Salt Lake City Bees.

Following the game, an awards ceremony will take place at the Crest Theater in Sacramento at which the winning student film entries from the Directing Change Student Video contest will be recognized and screened. The statewide contest empowers students to take action to prevent suicide, reduce stigma related to mental illness and promote mental health and wellness among their fellow students. This year 432 submissions, representing 996 students from 112 high schools and 9 UC campus locations were received. Participating high school and UC students competed regionally by submitting 60-second videos in two categories: suicide prevention and ending the stigma of mental illness.

“Participants in this inaugural event will get the tools, information, support and inspiration they need to become change agents in their communities,” said Maureen Bauman, California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA).

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities, and administers programs on a state, regional, and local basis. Working with CalMHSA, counties efficiently and effectively deliver prevention and early intervention services that improve student mental health, prevent suicide, and eliminate stigma and discrimination.

To date, California counties partnership with CalMHSA has enabled 820,000 Californians to access crisis and early intervention services; trained 125,000 individuals in prevention strategies; and made systemic improvements with a long-term impact such as changing school administrator credentialing standards to include mental health training and to adopt new guidelines for reporting on mental health and illness by journalists. For more information, visit www.eachmindmatters.org.

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Press contact:

Rosemary O’Brien, Runyon Saltzman & Einhorn, 916-446-9900, robrien@rs-e.com