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Governor Brownback Proclaims May as Mental Health Awareness Month in Kansas

TOPEKA – Governor Sam Brownback today signed a proclamation designating May as Mental Health Awareness Month in Kansas, calling upon all citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools in Kansas to commit to increasing awareness and understanding of mental illness and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental health conditions.

“We are here today to remind Kansans that mental illness is a common, painful experience for many people and their families,” Governor Brownback said. “My administration is working to strengthen the community and institutional supports our state offers those in need of help.”

“Mental illness is often called an invisible illness. Many people are suffering in silence. One in five Americans has experienced mental illness within the past year. It doesn’t discriminate. Anyone can develop a mental illness,” Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) Shawn Sullivan said at the proclamation signing ceremony.

“Attitudes around mental illness are beginning to change, but we still have a long way to go toward being able to discuss mental illness as a health challenge,” Secretary Sullivan said. “Our agency is committed to bringing awareness, recognition and education to the issues surrounding behavioral health.”

KDADS has programs in place to allow all Kansans to play a role in building safe, healthy and supportive communities that support those with mental illness.

“Community initiatives and individual citizens’ actions are vital to combat mental health misconceptions and stigma. Let’s all begin by having genuine, open conversations about how mental health issues impact our state, communities and neighborhoods,” Secretary Sullivan said. “We can help stop the discrimination and end the silence about mental health issues.”

Information about KDADS’ mental health programs and services, as well as collaborative efforts with community and advocacy groups focused on mental health, is available on the agency website at

www.kdads.ks.gov and at <http://www.kansasbehavioralhealthservices.org>.

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The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services mission is to foster an environment that promotes security, dignity and independence for all Kansans.