



For Immediate Release

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Mental Health, Substance Use Conditions Common, But Treatable; Individuals Can Live Productive Lives

Punta Gorda-In recognition of May being Mental Health Awareness Month, individuals in the Charlotte County community will be raising awareness of mental health and erasing the stigma of psychiatric illnesses and mental health effort as they walk in "Do More for 1 in 4" Mental Health Awareness Walk presented by Criminal Justice Behavioral Health Advisory Council (CJBHAC) on Saturday, May 12th. Charlotte County is calling on the community to help the 1 in 4 American adults who live with a diagnosable, treatable mental health condition and understand how important mental health is to overall health.

This year we are having a bridge walk from Punta Gorda to Port Charlotte and back beginning at 7:30 am for those that want to a little extra exercise. The ceremony will begin at 9 am at Gilchrist Park in Punta Gorda and activities will include a scenic walk in beautiful Punta Gorda, vendors and information tables. Parking is available in the Public Parking lot located on the corner of Harvey Street and Retta Esplanade.

"We want people to know that while mental health and substance use conditions are common, they are extremely treatable and individuals go on to recover and lead full and productive lives," said Jessica Boles, Director of Community Relations, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care.

Too many people who are living with a mental health condition never seek or receive help due to stigma, lack of information, cost, or lack of health care insurance coverage—as high as 50 percent. "We want to change equation and help our families, friends and co-workers who may be reluctant to ask for help or don't know where to find it."

We are inviting everyone in the Charlotte County community to join us on Saturday, May 12th, 2012 by walking to raise awareness and help reduce the stigma of mental health. The first 100 walkers will receive a free "Do More for 1 in 4" T-shirt. The walk will also include free water, coffee from Starbucks, snacks, resources from local healthcare organizations and speakers from the community. If you would like to represent your organization by having a FREE table at our walk, please contact us immediately!

Sponsored by Charlotte Behavioral Health Care as well as CJBHAC, which includes: Charlotte Behavioral Health Care, *211, Charlotte County Homeless Coalition, Florida Health Partners/V.O., NAMI, Coastal Behavioral Health Care (FACT) and the Administrative Office of the Courts of Charlotte County.

For more information regarding the "Do More for 1 in 4" Mental Health Awareness Walk, please call Jessica K. Boles, Director of Community Relations, Charlotte Behavioral Health Care at 941-639-8300 ext. 275.

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