



## **Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **May is National Mental Health Month**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (May 1, 2019) - An estimated one in five, 20% of Americans, struggle with mental illness or other mental health issues. In conjunction with Mental Health Month, in May, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) is joining behavioral health organizations around the state and nation to increase public knowledge and spur action to boost mental health and general wellness.

The Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities (BHDID), within CHFS, encourages everyone to consider donating items to a community service organization this month. BHDID leadership say the donation drive's mission is twofold: it serves a population in need and has mental health benefits for those who participate.

“We all know somebody dealing with mental health issues, whether it's someone in our own family or at church, school, or work. Mental illness and mental health issues are more common than people recognize,” said BHDID Commissioner Wendy Morris.

“Engaging in service projects is great for your well-being. We encourage all Kentuckians

to look for service projects within their community, and to take time to acknowledge the importance of self-care and your mental health.”

Morris stressed self-care is a critical trauma-informed practice for professionals who work with and on behalf of individuals who have experienced trauma or who are in distress. A healthy lifestyle can help to prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions, as well as chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. It can also help people recover from these conditions.

“It’s important that we take care of our own mental health. There are lots of things we can do – getting enough sleep, watching our diet, getting enough exercise,” Morris added. “All of these things can help keep our mental health intact.”

Mental Health Month was started 70 years ago by Mental Health America to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of good mental health for everyone. This year’s promotion builds on the already existing 4Mind4Body campaign and explores the topics of animal companionship, spirituality and religion, humor, work-life balance, and recreation and social connections.

For more information on May is Mental Health Month, visit <https://www.nami.org/mentalhealthmonth> .

**MEDIA NOTE:** A video clip from Commissioner Morris is available online at: <https://youtu.be/tJ8UYF5cUoA>. Feel free to share the Commissioner’s comments on your websites &/or use the comments in your locally produced story.

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

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*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral*

*Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*