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May 3, 2010

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## **MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

**Richmond** – For over 60 years, May has been celebrated in the U.S. as mental health month, an opportunity to build awareness about the need for services as well as the advances made in mental health care. The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. In Virginia, over 316,000 adults have had a serious mental illness during the past year.

“We are especially challenged by the fact that difficult financial times often create greater demand for human services, including mental health programs; and simultaneously, the services available to provide needed treatment and supports are constrained by budget reductions,” said Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Commissioner James W. Stewart, III. “Every effort is being made to preserve the core services that are required to support individuals with mental illness in their recovery and to provide the more intensive crisis response services that assure an adequate safety net.”

### **The Need in Virginia:**

- Over 316,500 adults have had a serious mental illness during the past year.
- Up to 104,000 children and adolescents have a serious emotional disturbance, with over 66,200 exhibiting extreme impairment.
- In 2008, nearly 101,800 unduplicated individuals were served in mental health programs across Virginia’s 40 locally-run community services boards (CSBs). Of those, over 50,000 received case management services.
- There are 14 crisis stabilization units statewide, with two more to open soon. These 14 units served 2,776 individuals last year.
- Between 1986 and 2008, the numbers of individuals receiving various CSB mental health services grew from over 135,000 to over 161,000, an increase of 19 percent.
- There are currently 1,325 children, adults and older adults in Virginia’s nine state-run mental health hospitals.

DBHDS also recently completed work on a 50-minute documentary, “Voices of Hope and Recovery,” produced by award-winning Virginia filmmaker Robert Griffith. The film chronicles the struggles and victories of five Virginians who have overcome the grip of mental illness to live life on their own terms. The film was created using federal funds from the mental health block grant and can be accessed at [www.vimeo.com/8248404](http://www.vimeo.com/8248404).

For more information, please visit the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services’ Web site at [www.dbhds.virginia.gov](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov) or the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

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*Available to citizens statewide, Virginia’s public behavioral health and developmental disabilities services system is comprised of 40 community services boards (CSBs) and 16 state facilities. DBHDS seeks to promote dignity, choice, recovery, and the highest possible level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life for individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities or substance-use disorders.*

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