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May is National Mental Health Awareness Month; Harford County Human Relations Commission Promotes Treatment, Crisis Hotline

BEL AIR, Md., (May 19, 2015) – Everyone knows someone who has been affected by mental illness. The Harford County Human Relations Commission is recognizing National Mental Health Awareness Month in May by offering the following information about the nationwide impact of mental illness and the resources available to citizens in Harford County.

Mental illness affects one in five Americans, or 18% of the total adult population, according to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Unfortunately, treatment is often delayed or undiagnosed, and sadly, at least 41,149 people committed suicide in 2013 due to mental illness, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Mental disorders often start in adolescence or early adulthood and can continue throughout a person's lifetime. The good news is that mental illness is treatable and recovery is possible! Treatment and support include medications, counseling, lifestyle changes, peer support groups and rehabilitation programs.

The Harford County Department of Community Services, Harford County Health Department and the nonprofit Office on Mental Health of Harford County are striving to develop a well-rounded support system for people with mental illness. This partnership works with citizens and treatment providers to raise awareness about mental health, to reduce the stigma of mental illness and to improve access to mental health treatment in the county. One key resource for residents is the Harford County Mobile Crisis Team, which provides crisis

intervention and emergency mental health care. The crisis team is available 7 days per week, 8:00 a.m. to midnight at 410-638-5248.

The Harford County Human Relations Commission is a group of volunteer citizens who are appointed by the county executive and approved by the Harford County Council, and dedicated to “alleviating social problems and promoting equality, understanding and harmonious relations between the citizens of the County.” To learn more about the Commission, visit www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/humanrelations.

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