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***New Guidance for Behavioral Health Services Released:
ADHS Collaborates With Regional Behavioral Health Authorities***

(Phoenix, AZ) – The Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health (ADHS/DBHS) released Guidelines to Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (RBHAs) and providers to prepare for necessary changes as a result of the recent budget reductions which take effect July 1, 2010. Due to significantly less funding, some behavioral health services recipients will see a reduction in their services. In developing the Guidelines for RBHAs and providers, ADHS worked closely with the RBHAs to hold numerous community forums throughout the State in order to communicate with providers, and receive input from behavioral health service recipients, providers, and other important community stakeholders.

“These Guidelines represent hundreds if not thousands of work hours, careful and constant deliberation and many restless and sleepless nights by individuals within this agency, community members and other valued stakeholders,” said Dr. Laura Nelson, Acting Deputy Director of DBHS. “We also listened to and reflected upon the feedback, comments and suggestions we heard from hundreds of consumers, family members, providers and other stakeholders who attended community forums conducted throughout the state during April. Our goal was to find a way to provide the best behavioral health care we can for as many people as possible while working within financial and legal boundaries.”

Community Partnership of Southern Arizona (CPSA), which serves Pima, Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, and Santa Cruz counties, used its established communications network of service-provider staff (including peer support workers), advocacy groups and consumer-run organizations to inform behavioral health service recipients, their families and community stakeholders about the benefits change.

In addition to posting information and links in both Spanish and English on its Web site, CPSA held two forums in its regions for behavioral health service recipients, their families and stakeholders to provide input to DBHS about the benefit changes. The events were attended by more than 200 people, most of them behavioral health service recipients or family members.

“CPSA is dedicated to supporting our members and their families through this difficult transition,” said Neal Cash, CPSA’s President/Chief Executive Officer. “We are in the middle of a high-tech, high-‘touch’ process to make sure all our affected members receive personal attention to help them determine what this means for them and to identify other resources in the community.”

To ensure those impacted understand how these changes will affect them, Magellan implemented a safe and responsible three-phase, high-touch transition plan that calls for the rescreening of all behavioral health service recipients for AHCCCS eligibility, as well as multiple, face-to-face

interactions with each of them to explain the benefit change, and to help them connect to community-based resources. Magellan's goal is to make sure behavioral health service recipients affected by the budget cuts thoroughly understand the changes to their benefits, when and why these cuts are happening, and what community resources may be available to them after the cuts take effect on July 1, 2010.

"Magellan seeks a safe and responsible transition for the people we serve impacted by the state's fiscal crisis," said Dr. Richard Clarke, Magellan of Arizona's chief executive officer. "Magellan's transition efforts are about multiple interactions with those impacted to facilitate understanding of the benefit change, and successful linkages, wherever possible, to meaningful community supports that can help meet people's needs."

In addition to what will be a highly individualized process, Magellan has met with each Clinic Advisory Council at all of Maricopa County's 25 clinics, reaching more than 1500 people during April to discuss the changes. Magellan also will host additional forums in May at peer-run agencies, and has created a dedicated webpage that contains the most recent information on the transition. www.MagellanofAZ.com/NTTransition. Moreover, Magellan will host a series of six regional resource fairs throughout late May and early June where behavioral health service recipients and their families can meet directly with community organizations that offer services in their area.

Dr. Mick Pattinson, Chief Executive Officer, NARBHA said, "These are difficult times; however, NARBHA is committed to working with DBHS and our provider network to assure a carefully thought out implementation of the changes required with the utmost attention paid to consumers and family members who are impacted."

NARBHA hosted 7 forums attended by over 150 people and will host several upcoming forums including: Communities in Recovery Forum Wednesday, May 12th at 6:30 p.m. at Verde Valley Guidance Clinic (8 E. Cottonwood St., Cottonwood). NARBHA has identified all affected current persons being served in the NARBHA region and is working with its crisis service providers to educate those persons about changes in their benefits and to develop plans for crises and medication options. NARBHA continues to work with providers to identify methods by which crisis services can be most effectively delivered.

Cenpatco held six forums in its service areas: Casa Grande, Apache Junction, Payson, Globe, Parker and Yuma, with over 300 people in total attending the forums. "This is a difficult time for the State of Arizona, and most particularly for the behavioral health system. We need to all work together to ensure that we do our best to help our communities get through these hard times and budgetary challenges," said Terry Stevens, CEO of Cenpatco who presented information and collected feedback from the audience at all forums.

"Although these decisions have been extremely difficult, we truly appreciate the efforts our Regional Behavioral Health Authorities, our providers and the community at-large have made in working with us in a manner that maintains human dignity, promotes the principles of recovery and preserves high quality care," concluded ADHS's Dr. Laura Nelson.

The RBHAs will continue to work with DBHS in the coming months to assure that any necessary transitions are done in a way to minimize any disruption in care.

To view the actual guidelines, access RBHA websites and contact information, and learn more about ADHS's Division of Behavioral Health Services please visit: <http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/updates/>