

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAPHS Applauds White House Initiative to Reduce Mental Health Stigma

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#### **Association Members Commit To Offering Community and Professional Education**

(Washington, DC, June 3, 2013)...."The National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS) and its members applaud the Administration's launch today of a national dialogue on mental health," said NAPHS President and CEO Mark Covall. The effort was first announced earlier in the year as part of a presidential action plan in response to the tragedy in Newtown, CT in December 2012. It is being officially launched today at a National Conference on Mental Health, which will be attended by NAPHS. "We appreciate President Obama and Vice President Biden for their commitment to improving the lives of all Americans. Mental health is integral to overall health. Better understanding about mental and addictive disorders will go a long way toward creating an environment that encourages people to recognize and seek help in a timely way. We need to replace fear, stigma, and shame with a dialogue based on empowerment and hope.

"As healthcare professionals and caregivers, NAPHS members have committed to sharing our expertise to help communities both understand mental illnesses and to find ways to better meet community needs for behavioral health services," said Mr. Covall. "At the start of the year, NAPHS asked its membership for feedback on the types of programming they intend to make available. A variety of NAPHS member organizations committed to providing an estimated 2,800 community outreach forums/dialogues in all regions of the country in 2013. The forums are planned to reach various audiences, including schools, first responders, parents and families, faith-based organizations, business leaders, and healthcare professionals. Total attendance at NAPHS-member events is estimated to be at least 32,000 people. This is just an initial commitment by our members, and we know many more will join this effort."

NAPHS also earlier this year released [\*Responding to the Newtown Tragedy: A White Paper on Behavioral Health as a Partner in the Solution\*](#). "The NAPHS white paper presents an analysis of what we know about behavioral health, about treatment of these disorders, and about current barriers to necessary treatment. It includes extensive references and data along with specific recommendations for action," said Mr. Covall.

"We look forward to working with the Administration and communities throughout the United States to raise awareness that there is help, hope, and recovery," he said.

NAPHS advocates for behavioral health and represents provider systems that are committed to the delivery of responsive, accountable, and clinically effective prevention, treatment, and care for children, adolescents, adults, and older adults with mental and substance use disorders. Its members are behavioral healthcare provider organizations that own or manage more than 700 specialty psychiatric hospitals, general hospital psychiatric and addiction treatment units and behavioral healthcare divisions, residential treatment facilities, youth services organizations, and extensive outpatient networks. Founded in 1933, the association is headquartered in Washington, DC.