News Release: Rally at Capitol Focuses on Children’s Mental Health Awareness

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AUSTIN — An event at the Capitol on May 5 will recognize Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week with music, a rally and speakers highlighting this year’s theme of help and hope after trauma.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas System of Care will co-host the event and rally sponsored by Sen. Jane Nelson, on the south steps of the Texas Capitol. The rally will feature keynote speaker Vince Young, quarterback for the 2005 national championship-winning University of Texas football team, as well as remarks by Rep. Donna Howard.

“Texas has made significant investments in our mental health system, which is crucial for the future of our state,” Sen. Nelson said. “I’m proud of our commitment to this issue and will continue to press for legislative action to help Texans struggling with mental health issues.”

Attendees will then participate in a festival on the Capitol grounds, complete with children’s activities, live music, an Italian water-ice cart, carnival-style games and a mental health resource fair.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and Postpartum Depression Awareness Month. Like chronic diseases, mental health requires ongoing treatment with medications and therapy, which can help people improve and recover. Local efforts aim to reduce the impact of mental illness on Texas communities by raising awareness about the importance of children’s mental health so that children receive help for mental health disorders with the same urgency as other health conditions.

One out of five children have a diagnosable mental health need. Unfortunately, not every child receives mental health services. Whether this is due to a lack of knowledge about services or difficulties accessing services, children and families need to know it’s OK and important to seek help.

Fast Facts

- 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives.
- 1 in 20 people will develop a serious mental illness.
- Half of all cases of mental illness start by age 14, and three-quarters by age 24.
- Only 44 percent of adults with diagnosable mental health problems and less than 20 percent of children and adolescents receive needed treatment. (mentalhealth.gov)

Earlier this spring, children from around the state entered in the annual Children’s Mental Health Awareness Creative Arts Contest and submitted artwork representing why mental health is important to them. Winning entries are posted on the Texas System of Care’s website and are on display on the ground floor of the Texas State Capitol building through May 6.

WHAT: Children’s Mental Health Awareness rally, festival and children’s activities
**WHEN:** May 5, 2018 (rain or shine)  
9 a.m.: Rally at the Capitol  
10 a.m. - noon: Activities on the Texas Capitol Grounds  

**WHERE:** South Steps of the Texas Capitol, 1100 Congress Ave., Austin (Rally and Festival)  

**VISUALS:** Speakers, children’s activities, a march around the Capitol, a BodyJam/Dance-Off, and the release by attendees of wind-up paper butterflies, which represent transformation and the flight to freedom from children’s mental health challenges.

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