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Subject: Gov. Nikki Haley, advocates discuss increased support for mental health services

Gov. Nikki Haley, advocates discuss increased support for mental health services

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Governor Nikki Haley, Department of Mental Health (DMH) Director John Magill, Mental Health Commission Chairman Dr. Alison Evans and Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) Director Bob Toomey discussed increased support for mental health services in the governor's FY 2012-2013 Executive Budget during a press conference today at DMH.

Video of today's press conference is available [here](#). Download a copy of the governor's budget [here](#).

Gov. Haley said, "In the executive budget you saw that we stayed below the spending cap, but you also saw that we looked at the needs and the priorities that really need to be made. One of the things that we have fallen on in South Carolina is we have allowed mental health services to be sacrificed in the name of other things, and we have allowed the people of this state to suffer because of it. Mental health issues aren't just issues of extreme patients and hospitals. Mental health issues impact parents and sisters and brothers and children and coworkers – all the people in our life. These are good, productive citizens that deserve to live a good healthy life. If given treatment, they can be incredibly successful. If not given treatment, we as a state have failed them. And so this was an executive budget that said we are not going to ignore this anymore."

DMH Director Magill said, "The budget recommendations that the governor has made will allow us to sustain some of the operations now so there wouldn't be a further decline in our systems. It also allows violent sexual predators to be a line item rather than us pulling money out of other parts of the mental health budget. It also provides money for us to provide resources for the care that we have to seek for some of our patients outside of our system. It puts money into the community for our crisis stabilization. There are a number of things that the governor's budget did that actually enhanced our budget request, and all I can say is that I'm so appreciative governor that you've done that. "

Mental Health Commission Chairman Dr. Evans said, "It's a great day to be in South Carolina, and it's a great day for mental health in South Carolina. We are so pleased with the governor's emphasis on mental health in her budget. She has kept her promise to us to stand behind the folks in this state who suffer from mental illness...Now we have the opportunity to move forward and to make some programs whole again and hopefully to expand some of the services that are needed."

Also on hand for today's press conference: Dr. Meera Narasimhan, Professor of Clinical Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science at the University of South Carolina and Director for Research Initiatives for DMH; David Jameson, Jameson Associates; Shilpa Srinivasan, Associate Professor of Clinical Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science at the University of South Carolina; Buck Terry, Mental Health Commission; Dr. Everard Rutledge, Mental Health Commission; Joan Moore, Mental Health Commission.

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