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NIKKI R. HALEY

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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For immediate release

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Gov. Nikki Haley Announces Children's Mental Health Week In South Carolina

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Governor Nikki Haley today joined the Federation of Families of South Carolina, and the Joint Council on Children and Adolescents on the north steps of the Statehouse to participate in the annual Children's Mental Health Awareness Rally. The governor issued a proclamation declaring the first week of May as Children's Mental Health Week throughout South Carolina.

"Protecting our children is one of the most important things we can do, and making sure that children affected by mental illness are provided the treatment they need is an important part of that," said Gov. Nikki Haley. "Raising awareness about this issue and making sure the public is educated is critical in making sure these kids are able to live the normal, productive lives they deserve."

According to the United States department of Health and Human Services, an estimated 1 out of 5 children between the ages of 9 and 17 suffer from identifiable mental, emotional, or behavioral problems that require treatment, and in any given year, only 20% of these children receive such treatment.

"The annual Children's Mental Health Awareness Week Rally at the Statehouse is an opportunity for us to join with over a thousand communities across the country in celebrating the positive impact that we can have on the lives of young people when we are able to provide education around the importance of promoting mental wellness of children into every environment, and reduce the negative stigma surrounding mental illness," said Diane Flashnick, Executive Director, Federation of Families of South Carolina.

"On behalf of the many child serving agencies, advocates and parents that have come together as the Joint Council on Children and Adolescents, I commend each of us to recognize children's mental health as a core public health issue," said Tony Keck, Director of the South Carolina DHHS and Chair of the Joint Council on Children and Adolescents. "The right mix of behavioral illness prevention, screening and supportive services can have a tremendous impact on the well-being of our children, families and communities."

“Mental health treatment works, and the earlier treatment is begun, the better it works. Identifying children experiencing serious emotional problems and providing treatment and assistance to those children and their families greatly reduces the risk for later, more serious, problems,” said John Magill, Director of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health. “Those problems that can include failing in school, with lifelong consequences for that child, or even intervention by the juvenile justice system.”

To learn more about children’s mental health in South Carolina, please visit www.fedfamsc.org.

A photo of the Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week Rally and a copy of the proclamation are attached.

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