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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:**

Scott Block  
Executive Director  
815-788-4364

### **76% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT MENTAL HEALTH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH**

The National Council for Behavioral Health, the unifying voice of America's health care organizations that delivers mental health and addiction treatment and services, issued the inaugural America's Mental Health 2018, a comprehensive study of access to mental health care.

The study, which assesses Americans' current access to and attitudes towards mental health services, revealed American mental health services are insufficient, and despite high demand, the root of the problem is lack of access – or the ability to find care. Furthermore, the study evidenced:

- DEMAND FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IS STRONGER THAN EVER
- A LACK OF AWARENESS OF SERVICES AND SOCIAL STIGMA AROUND SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH CARE PERSIST IN AMERICA
- LACK OF ACCESS IS THE ROOT CAUSE FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN AMERICA

Fortunately, in McHenry County, hope in a crisis is available to everyone, 24/7, through a free app called, MCHHELP. Individuals connect via text or voice with a licensed, professional counselor.

“Help is available 24/7 to connect with services via text or voice,” explains Scott Block McHenry County Mental Health Board executive director. “Trained, licensed counselors are ready to respond to questions, concerns, anxieties and crises. Plus with the MCHHELP App downloaded on your phone, you can access the Mental Health Board's list of local service providers.”

“While we can't predict that the use of the MCHHELP App can prevent tragedy, it can and does help people resolve outstanding concerns or connect with services,” says Block. “Callers typically address issues surrounding relationships, bullying, homework anxiety, substance abuse, depression, loneliness, self-injury and more. The connection can remain anonymous yet the individual gets help from a professional counselor to alleviate the anxiety. Often callers are directed to other services available on the app.”

Recognizing that “lack of knowledge of where to go” for help is a barrier to care, the Mental Health Board's 2018-2020 Three Year Plan highlights “Awareness of Services” as a significant community issue in need of continuous attention. Below is a listing of Mental Health Board efforts and activities underway to increase the community's “Awareness of Services.”



- The McHenry County Crisis Line (800-892-8900), supported by the Mental Health Board, provides a central point of access for all behavioral health needs in McHenry County. Local mental health professionals staff the McHenry County Crisis Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The Mental Health Board has added a “Services Directory” to its website at [www.mc708.org](http://www.mc708.org).
- The Mental Health can be contacted during normal business hours at 815-455-2828 to assist with service navigation.
- The Mental Health Board hosts a monthly “Intake Coordinators” meeting, which is attended by representatives from network providers. The Intake Coordinators share service offerings, eligibility criteria, payer information and waitlist information so that any provider may assist residents in linkage to services.
- The Mental Health Board hosts Quarterly Meetings with School Social Workers, Counselors and Administrators to improve the relationship between educational institutions and community-based behavioral health services providers.
- On August 13<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am – 11:00am, the Mental Health Board is hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Resource Fair for School Professionals. This is an opportunity for school professionals to connect with area providers to learn more about the helpful resources and services available in our community. Boost your ability to provide information and referrals to the families and individuals you work with.
- In attempt to assist the Spanish speaking community with accessing services, the Mental Health Board has collaborated with Youth & Family Center (formerly Garden Quarter Neighborhood Resource Center) to employ a Bilingual Service Navigator. The Bilingual Service Navigator can be reached at 815-322-2357.