



# AMERICAN MENTAL WELLNESS ASSOCIATION

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(photos attached)

## PROCLAMATION ISSUED TO AMERICAN MENTAL WELLNESS ASSOCIATION

August 30, 2017 – The Dauphin County Commissioners today presented a Proclamation to the American Mental Wellness Association to recognize their first anniversary and to call attention to its mission to build healthier lives free of mental health problems.

Receiving the Proclamation on behalf of the American Mental Wellness Association's Board of Directors was Executive Director, Sharon Engdahl and her Assistant, Alexa Moody.

Engdahl praised the Commissioners on the work they are doing throughout Dauphin County to address mental health problems which includes substance use disorders. "More people suffer from mental health problems than those with cancer, heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes. Research shows 83% of adolescents entering treatment for an Opiate Use Disorder have at least one comorbid psychiatric illness, with more than 50% having two or more psychiatric diagnoses." Engdahl explained. "It is likely Major Depressive Disorder precedes Opiate Use Disorder by about three years: with the risk of starting heroin being thirteen times higher in adolescents and young adults who are opiate users."

The American Mental Wellness Association in just one year has accomplished much to promote prevention, early intervention, scientific research and cures of mental health problems. It is the unifying voice and movement for mental wellness in the United States, similar to the American Cancer Society, Lung Association, and Heart Association. People and organizations can go to their website and sign up for free as a "Champion for Prevention, Early Intervention, Scientific Research and Cures of Mental Health Problems."

"We are a one stop hub for anyone wanting information on mental wellness and mental health problems," said Engdahl. "Mental health problems are medical conditions and just like other medical conditions need to be addressed early for the best outcomes. Unfortunately, most

President – Susan Boyle, B.A.

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Elizabeth Kostelnik, M.S. M.B.A.

John Rubisch, Ph.D.

Alyce Spector, B.S. ED

Amy Whitworth, B.A. M.A.

Executive Director -  
Sharon Engdahl, B.So. Sc.

Assistant to the Executive Director -  
Alexa Moody, A.A.

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### Our Vision –

We envision a world that through public education values prevention, early intervention, scientific research, and cures of mental health problems for the holistic health of the individual and society.

### Our Mission –

We are building healthier lives free of mental health problems through educational outreach.

25 Spruce Road, Marysville, PA 17053

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interest in helping people with mental health problems is at 4<sup>th</sup> stage of the illness where they are self-medicating on drugs and alcohol or having suicidal ideation, attempting suicide, or succumbing to suicide.”

Engdahl shared the AMWA’s signature handout card that is free to download off their website. It shows the four stages of a mental health problem and under each stage their signs and symptoms. “Prevention and early intervention is scientifically proven to work, yet the message isn’t getting out. Having people know the early signs and symptoms will assist them in getting help early and will keep them from getting so sick.” she said.

Commissioner Hartwick stated the county is very interested in continuing their partnership with the American Mental Wellness Association as dollars for treatment are very limited and are used to help the very sick. Yet prevention and early intervention is so important for the 270,000 residents they serve.

The AMWA recently presented a workshop at the Central Pennsylvania Addiction Conference held at the Farm Show that was sponsored by Dauphin County. They also participated in several health fairs throughout the county over the past year. Their Pennsylvania Representative, The Mental Wellness Awareness Association, has been providing Mental Health First Aid Trainings throughout the county, several for various school district faculty and staff.

Future endeavors for the AMWA were announced by Engdahl. They will be endorsing the Zero Suicide Initiative during Suicide Prevention Week, September 10<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>, will partner with the Dana Alliance to celebrate Brain Awareness Week in March, and they just released The American Mental Wellness Girl Scouts USA Patch.

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