National Recovery Month
Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover
SEPTEMBER 2011

OVERVIEW

Recovery Benefits Everyone!

In 2009, 4.3 million people aged 12 or older received treatment for a substance use disorder[1] and 30.2 million adults aged 18 or older received mental health services,[2] thus beginning their recovery. Personal stories of those in recovery from substance use and mental disorders inspire and empower others to begin their own journey. Read about several people's recovery journey in the "Join the Voices for Recovery" document in this toolkit.

For 22 years, ***National Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover (Recovery Month)*** has celebrated people in recovery, lauded the work of treatment providers, and spread the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and recovery is possible. ***Recovery Month*** highlights that all individuals have the fundamental and inherent value to be accepted and treated with respect, dignity, and worth. In addition, the observance highlights that behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness. This year's theme, ***"Join the Voices for Recovery: Recovery Benefits Everyone,"*** emphasizes that:

- All Americans have the opportunity to access provisions within the Affordable Care Act and Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act (MHPAEA), aimed to improve physical and emotional health while ensuring people will receive the care they need at a more reasonable cost.
- Public awareness will increase access for those in need of essential substance use and mental health treatment and recovery support services, including behavioral health treatment.
- These changes will improve the overall health and well-being of people in the United States.

The passage of the MHPAEA provides parity, or the recognition by insurance services—both public and private—that substance use and mental disorders are treated comparably to other physical health and medical conditions.[3]

Recovery Month supports many of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Strategic Initiatives, particularly the goals of increasing public awareness of substance use and mental disorders, health reform implementation, and offering recovery support through an individual, program, and system approach. Sponsored by SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this year's ***Recovery Month*** campaign encourages policymakers, health care providers, the recovery community, friends and family members, and employers to help people seek assistance for substance use and mental disorders with the same urgency as any other health care issue.

This overview will discuss health reform's impact on access to treatment and recovery support services; the overall need for prevention, treatment, and recovery from substance use and mental disorders in today's society; and how to raise awareness about these services. Additionally, it will highlight the effectiveness and importance of removing barriers to treatment and recovery support services.

The Substance Use and Mental Health Landscape

Substance use and mental disorders touch everyone in some way—regardless of race, age, gender, workplace, geography, or socioeconomic level. While the conditions are widespread, treatment services are effective, and recovery is possible. In fact, millions of Americans are in recovery today.[4] At the National Summit on Recovery, recovery from substance use disorders was defined as a process of change through which an individual achieves abstinence from alcohol and/or drugs and improved health, emotional wellness, and quality of life.[5] According to the National Consensus Statement, recovery from mental health problems is a process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.[6] For some individuals, recovery from a mental health problem means the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life despite a disability. For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms.[7]

ROB JASPERSON
ROSEBURG, OR

Recovery has created a different world for me these past 23 years. I entered a residential program in 1987 at age 40, after my second marriage began to fail and I realized that alcohol had been my best friend for 27 years. We have no way of knowing the damaging effects of our addiction on our families and friends until we change. Addiction causes one to look inward, not out toward others.

That has changed now. In my first year of sobriety, I worked with recovering adolescents. After a 30-year career with the U.S. Postal Service, I returned to college, graduated, and have been a certified addictions counselor for the last five years. I help my clients set the best example they can for their families. We need their love and trust.

I have a happy marriage of 32 years with my wife and enjoy close relationships with my son, daughter, and two grandchildren. I spend my free time playing active sports like road-biking and kayaking, and doing creative arts. I have volunteered for many organizations. I am on the local American Cancer Society's Relay for Life team and am on the volunteer committee with Umpqua Partners Ramble for Recovery. I also enjoy helping local Cub Scouts earn badges.

My greatest and most humbling contribution was to anonymously donate a kidney in 2005. I was also chosen in 2010 to be A&E's Oregon Delegate for Faces and Voices of Recovery in celebration of ***Recovery Month***. Recovery is a second chance at life and has shown me that there are no limitations to giving to our community and leading the best life we possibly can.

Substance use disorders—which include misuse, dependence, or addiction to alcohol and/or legal or illegal drugs—and mental health problems—which include depression, anxiety disorder, mood disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and others—are major public health concerns in the United States, but prevention and treatment services are available and effective. Studies have shown that substance use disorders include both physical and mental dependences,[8] and have characteristics similar to other chronic diseases, such as asthma, hypertension, and diabetes.[9] Like some other health conditions, with substance use disorders:[10]

- Genetics can play a role in the likelihood that one will develop the condition;
- The physical impact can be significant and may lead to increased hospitalization and other health care conditions;
- Self-care helps develop better coping mechanisms and a healthier lifestyle; and
- For some, medication can help by targeting specific imbalances and can ease the discomfort of withdrawal symptoms in early recovery.

Like substance use disorders, mental health problems are common, yet treatable, and the realities are often misunderstood. An individual's mental health refers to our cognitive and/or emotional well-being—how one thinks, feels, and acts. The most common mental health problems are:

- Anxiety disorders, which include panic disorder, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). To cope with an anxiety disorder, most people will try to avoid exposure to whatever object or situation triggers their anxiety.[11] With therapy that focuses on identifying, understanding, and changing thinking and behavior patterns, benefits are usually seen within 12 to 16 weeks of receiving treatment.[12]

- Mood disorders, which include major and mild depression, bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Experts claim that approximately 80 percent of patients with mood disorders improve significantly with treatment and recovery support services.[13]

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, an estimated 26.2 percent of Americans aged 18 and older—approximately one in four adults—suffer from a diagnosable mental health problem in a given year.[14] Fortunately, between 70 and 90 percent of individuals with mental health problems have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life with a combination of medication, therapy, and other support.[15] As with other chronic illnesses, individuals who seek treatment and recovery support services for substance use and mental disorders learn new life skills and go on to live healthy, empowered, and productive lives.

Understanding the Need for Prevention and Treatment

Effective and cost-efficient strategies for preventing and reducing the severity of some substance use and mental disorders exist. For example, school-based prevention programs for children, teens, and young adults that talk about the dangers of alcohol and/or drug use can reduce the development of substance use disorders.[16] Research suggests these school-based prevention programs can delay the initiation of use for approximately two years, with some youth never initiating any substance use.[17] Cost-benefit estimates indicate that effective school-based programs could save up to $18 for every $1 spent on these initiatives.[18]

Suicide is another condition correlated with substance use and mental disorders. Suicide rates among individuals seeking treatment for alcohol or drug misuse may be up to 10 and 14 times higher, respectively, than suicide rates in the general population.[19] Since suicide is a major cause of death among people with serious mental health problems, it is important that families, policymakers, community mental health centers, health care professionals, faith-based communities, employers, and the general public, alike, help combat this all too common problem.[20]

SAMHSA's Prevention Strategic Initiative builds emotional health, prevents or delays onset, and mitigates symptoms and complications from substance use and mental disorders. Many SAMHSA-sponsored programs, including Building Blocks for a Healthy Future and Too Smart to Start, are designed to provide parents, caregivers, and educators with necessary skills to prevent the use of potentially harmful substances, including alcohol, tobacco products, illicit and prescription drugs, and other addictive substances.

Despite numerous successful prevention efforts, in 2009, 20.9 million people aged 12 or older still needed treatment for substance use disorders but did not receive it at a specialty substance use facility,[21] and 6.1 million adults in the United States aged 18 or older who reported an unmet need for mental health care and didn't receive services.[22] According to national estimates of the health costs associated with 33 diseases and conditions, alcohol misuse ranked as the second costliest condition, followed by tobacco use at sixth, and drug disorders at seventh.[23] Fortunately, substance use and mental disorders are treatable, and recovery is possible. In fact, recovery is so common that half of all adults over age 18 know someone in recovery from addiction to commonly used substances, such as alcohol, illicit drugs, or prescription drugs.[24]

A number of risk factors are associated with substance use and mental disorders. The use and misuse of substances, including tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, and over-the-counter medications, often begins in childhood or teenage years.[25] Research suggests that genetic factors account for between 40 to 60 percent of a person's risk of developing a substance use disorder.[26] Also, children of parents with substance use disorders are at greater risk for depression or anxiety,[27] physical health problems, and learning deficits.[28]

However, just because a substance use or mental disorder runs in a family, it doesn't mean that others members will be affected. In fact, more than one-half of all children of people with alcohol dependence don't develop the disease.[29] Research shows that children in grades 7 through 12 who learn about the dangers of drug use from their parents are up to 50 percent less likely to ever misuse substances, therefore, it's important for parents to have ongoing conversations about the consequences of alcohol and/or drug use.[30] Likewise, while some mental health problems—such as bipolar disorder—tend to run in families, most children with a family history will not develop the condition.[31] It's also important to reduce discrimination and prejudices surrounding mental health problems by openly discussing mental health, just like any other health condition. If parents are worried that they or their children may be at risk for a substance use or mental disorder, consider the following tips:

- **Do not drink illegally or use illicit drugs** – In 2009, 10.4 million people under the legal drinking age consumed alcohol.[32] Research proves that those who start drinking at a later age are less likely to develop a substance use disorder than those who began using before age 21.[33] Additionally, the age that a person first uses an illicit drug, such as marijuana, correlates with the development of substance use disorders. For example, 12.6 percent of children aged 14 or younger who first tried marijuana in 2009 were classified with a substance use disorder, whereas only 2.1 percent of adults over age 18 who first tried marijuana developed a dependence.[34]

- **Don't misuse prescription or over-the-counter medications** – In 2009, 2.6 million Americans age 12 and older took a prescription pain reliever, tranquilizer, stimulant, or sedative for nonmedical purposes.[35] Medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, can have harmful consequences if used in excess, not for the prescribed reasons, or by someone other than for whom it was purchased.[36, 37] Furthermore, abusing, sharing, or distributing prescription drugs is illegal.[38] Only one third of parents report discussing the risks of abusing prescription medicines with their kids.[39] Warn family and friends that while buying prescription drugs online may be cheaper than in a pharmacy, there are many possible risks. Not only do online stores not know the cause of the person's health problem and medical history, some medicines sold online are fake, too strong or weak, too old to work, aren't labeled, and may even not be FDA-approved.[40]

- **Address traumatic events** – Experiencing a traumatic event contributes to the risk of developing a substance use or mental disorder. Be proactive and recognize feelings if trauma or difficulty has been experienced, such as a death or divorce in the family, violence, or catastrophe.[41]

- **Talk to a health care professional or trusted person** – Communicate any concerns with a primary care doctor, nurse, clergy, peer, or other community health provider. These professionals can recommend intervention and prevention strategies that could help avoid developing a substance use or mental disorder.[42]

- **Stay physically and mentally healthy** – Exercise and eat healthy foods to prevent physical ailments that can contribute to a substance use or mental disorder. In addition, incorporate techniques into a daily routine that can prevent stress, including listening to music, meditation, and journaling.[43] The Federal Government and many States are creating wellness initiatives to promote both physical and mental wellness. For example, SAMHSA's 10x10 Wellness Initiative aims to increase the life expectancy for individuals with mental health problems by 10 years over the next 10 years. Sign the Pledge for Wellness to show support for people with mental health problems in hope they achieve optimal health, happiness, and recovery.

Expanded Access to Treatment

With the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, health care coverage will expand to approximately 32 million Americans who were not previously insured.[44] These new changes will likely help the 36.8 percent of people who needed treatment for a substance use disorder, but did not receive it due to insufficient health care coverage or cost issues (based on combined data from 2006 to 2009).[45] In 2009, approximately 22 percent of adults with substance use and/or mental disorders were uninsured. Of these uninsured adults, one in three had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level.[46] There is a great need to help people who suffer from substance use and/or mental disorders gain access to treatment and recovery support services and now, through health reform, this vision is about to become a reality for many.

The Affordable Care Act includes many new provisions aimed at improving coverage for and access to substance use and mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. While insurance plans will differ from person to person, through this Act, which will be fully enacted by 2020, coverage will expand to millions who are currently uninsured. For instance, the law:

- Expands the eligibility for Medicaid, a health program for low income individuals and families, to 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level ($14,484 for one person, $29,726 for a family of four in 2011).[47] All newly eligible parents and adults without children will receive basic benefits, which includes essential substance use and mental health services at parity.[48]

- Provides subsidies on a sliding fee scale to purchase health coverage for individuals and families up to 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level ($43,320 for one person, $88,200 for a family of four in 2010).[49]

Through the implementation of the MHPAEA, employer health plans with more than 50 employees enrolled that choose to include coverage for substance use and mental health services must provide those benefits in the same way as all other medical and surgical services covered by their plan. Therefore, for these plans that choose to offer the coverage, co-payments, deductibles, and annual and lifetime caps on substance use and mental health treatment benefits must be equal to benefits for other medical conditions.[50] Specifically, with the implementation of the MHPAEA, the co-payments and deductibles for a visit cannot be larger and there cannot be greater limits in behavioral health inpatient days than for medical or surgical inpatient days.[51]

Additionally, when the Affordable Care Act is fully implemented in 2014, State Health Insurance Exchanges will provide individual and small businesses with an insurance marketplace. This "one-stop-shop" will help consumers find and compare affordable, high-quality health insurance options. Exchanges will bring new transparency to the market so that consumers will be able to compare plans based on price and quality.[52]

Behavioral health is essential to health and this expanded access to treatment and recovery support services can provide thousands of Americans the opportunity to live happy, healthy, and productive lives in long-term recovery.

Encouraging Recovery in Communities Across America

Today, 22.5 million people aged 12 or older need help for an alcohol and/or drug use problem, but less than 10 percent receive treatment,[53] costing society more than $121 billion annually.[54] In addition, mental health problems—including suicide—account for over 15 percent of the burden of disease in highly developed nations such as the United States. The World Health Organization describes the burden of disease as the impact of a health problem in an area measured by financial cost, mortality, and morbidity. The burden caused by mental health problems is more than the burden caused by all types of cancer.[55]

Barriers to the treatment of substance use and mental disorders, including discrimination, lack of access, and denial still exist and must be removed. In 2009, roughly 1.9 million adults aged 18 or older who reported an unmet need for mental health care did not receive services because they believed that their problem could be handled without care. In addition, 1.1 million adults didn't know where to go for mental health services.[56] These barriers need to be removed. The following groups can be instrumental in raising awareness about the importance of accessing treatment and recovery support services and their effectiveness to help erase barriers. Additionally, they can educate people nationwide on the physical, emotional, economical, and social benefits of recovery.

- **Policymakers** – Local, State, and Federal policymakers need to inform their constituents about the benefit of treatment for and recovery from substance use and mental disorders—both on a local and national scale. They can support and promote treatment and recovery support services by sharing why and how recovery positively affects each community—socially and economically. With the passage of the Affordable Care Act, health care coverage will expand to thousands of individuals in the United States who previously were uninsured. By investing in prevention and treatment, the burden could drastically decrease. For example, after individuals receive treatment in an integrated primary care and substance use setting, total medical costs per patient per month are more than halved, from $431 to $200.[57] With treatment, one's overall health improves, community crime decreases, and employment increases.[58] SAMHSA's, Health Reform Strategic Initiative will provide valuable information to policymakers on insurance coverage for individuals with substance use and mental disorders as health reform is implemented and the delivery of person-centered care and services by providers.

- **Individuals Affected by Substance Use and Mental Disorders, Families, and People in Recovery** – Millions of people in the United States are directly or indirectly affected by substance use and mental disorders. Recovery positively affects communities, both socially and economically. By investing in treatment, one can expect the following in their community:[59]

  - Decreased crime
  - Improved health
  - Increased employment

Additionally, for every $1 invested in substance use disorder treatment, taxpayers save at least $7.46 in costs to society.[60] To reduce costs to society and improve the Nation's health, we must encourage those in need to seek treatment and recovery support services.

If an individual's family member or friend's personality, physical appearance, or behavior has changed drastically, it may be a symptom of a substance use or mental disorder. Other common physical and behavioral signs and symptoms may include:[61, 62]

- Drastic changes in eating habits or unexplained weight loss or gain
- Poor physical coordination
- Red, watery eyes or pupils that are larger or smaller than usual
- Tremors or shakes of the hands, feet, or head
- Changes in friends or sudden avoidance of old social circle
- Drop in grades at school or performance at work
- General lack of motivation, energy, and self-esteem
- Thoughts of suicide or long-lasting sadness or irritability
- Frequent outbursts of anger or aggressive behavior

Family members should know that helping a loved one is possible. All people should be familiar with prevention, treatment, and recovery services covered under their health plan and call their insurance company with any questions. For additional treatment and recovery support resources, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or visit SAMHSA's Treatment Locator. People already on a path of recovery can help others during their journey through support groups, so they too, can live a healthy, productive life and participate fully in their community.

- **Health Care Providers** – Primary care providers, community health centers, and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) screen, diagnose, and treat people with substance use and mental disorders or work with specialty providers to help people recover. These professionals are critical to the overall health of our Nation, since 45 percent of Americans have one or more chronic health conditions that require care.[63] These health conditions—including substance use and mental disorders—account for 75 percent of medical care in the United States.[64] In addition, nearly half of those with any mental health problems suffer from more than one condition at a given time, with severity strongly related to comorbidity.[65]

  Health care providers have a responsibility to know and recognize the signs and symptoms of a substance use and mental disorders and how to refer people to specialty treatment if necessary. Additionally, because trauma is an almost universal experience of people receiving treatment for a substance use or mental disorder, providers should support SAMHSA's Strategic Initiative focused on Trauma and Justice. By making trauma-informed decisions when considering treatment and recovery support services, individuals are more likely to recover and live a productive life.[66]

  Specialty treatment providers need to know how health reform will affect the delivery of services. For example, under the new law, treatment can be accessed by individuals who haven't received coverage in the past, resulting in an influx of patients. Treatment providers will need to reevaluate the services they offer and how they collaborate with general health care providers to serve the broader populations needing treatment.[67]

- **Workforce** – Of the 20.8 million adults aged 18 or older classified with dependence or abuse, 70 percent were employed full- or part-time.[68] Substance use disorders cost employers more than $100 billion annually through absenteeism, increased health claims, increased accidents, and lost productivity.[69] In addition, depression, the most common mental health problem in the workplace,[70] affects about 1 in 10 employees.[71] The annual economic cost of mental health problems is estimated to be at least $79 billion, of which approximately $63 billion is due to lost productivity.[72] It is essential for workplaces to publicize that prevention works, treatment is effective, and recovery is possible.

To help workers in need and defray the costs substance use and mental disorders have on the workplace, companies can easily create and implement employee assistance programs (EAPs). EAPs come in many forms, ranging from telephone-based to on-site programs, and often include:

- Confidential screening;
- Treatment referrals;
- Follow-up care; and
- Education and health information.

EAPs benefit companies by improving productivity by more than 50 percent[73] and allowing employees to gain support while keeping their job secure.[74] For example, 80 percent of Federal workers and their family members who received treatment for alcohol or drug problems through the Federal Occupational Health EAP reported improvements in work attendance. A majority also reported improvements in both work performance and social relationships.[75] In addition, absence, disability, and lost productivity related to mental health problems cost employers more than four times the amount of employee medical treatment. Depression treatment through EAPs can pay for itself through savings in lost earnings, not even taking into account other indirect costs such as increased productivity or reduction in other medical costs. Depression treatment offered by mental health specialists provided a net annual profit of $877 per patient in regained earnings alone.[76] Furthermore, the return on investment in EAP services for mental health problems is about a $2 to $4 savings for every dollar invested.[77]

It is important for everyone to lend a hand to those in need of support and help to overcome the barriers to treatment and recovery support services that exist. Prevention and treatment are essential in the recovery process, and more than 11,000 specialized facilities in the United States, including residential treatment centers, outpatient treatment programs, and hospital inpatient programs provide care for substance use and mental disorders.[78] Information about treatment options and special services in your area can be found by calling SAMHSA's National Helpline at **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD), as well as visiting ***http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment***.

Recovery Benefits Everyone

The recovery process is different for everyone. SAMHSA supports a recovery-oriented system of care, which recognizes that each person must be the central participant in his or her own recovery. Some people achieve recovery on their own, while others achieve it through peer-to-peer support groups or medication-assisted treatment. While service types may vary, all services should offer choice, honor an individual's potential for growth, focus on a person's strengths, and attend to the individual's overall health and well-being.[79]

Typically, the recovery process involves five broad steps: acknowledging the condition, receiving help, detoxification, working through a variety of treatment and/or support options, and maintaining a state of abstinence, health, and well-being.[80] For resources that can aid in one's recovery journey and improve overall well-being, refer to the resources available at the end of this document.

Investing in prevention, treatment, and recovery support services benefits everyone by reducing the social and economic burdens that substance use and mental disorders have on society. By investing in these services, the substance misuse costs that exceed half a trillion dollars,[81] and the mental health problems costing approximately $79 billion, annually, can be decreased.[82]

SAMHSA encourages community leaders, clergy, health care providers, and employers to inform all individuals that in the wake of health reform, coverage for substance use and/or mental health treatment and recovery support services (if provided) will be equal to the medical and surgical benefits provided for other health conditions. Through access to treatment, recovery is possible, ultimately improving one's entire well-being, including mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health.

Additional Recovery Resources

A variety of resources provide additional information on ***Recovery Month***, substance use and mental disorders, and prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Use the toll-free numbers and websites below to share your experiences, learn from others, and seek help from professionals. Through these resources, individuals can interact with others and find support on an as-needed, confidential basis.

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Website** – Leads efforts to reduce the impact of substance use and mental disorders on communities nationwide.
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)** – Provides 24-hour free and confidential information about substance use and mental disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery referrals in English or Spanish.
- **SAMHSA's "Find Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment" Website** – Contains information about treatment options and special services located in your area.
- **SAMHSA's "Considerations for the Provision of E-Therapy" Report** – Shares extensive information on the benefits, issues, and success of e-therapy.
- **SAMHSA's ADS Center** – Provides information and assistance to develop successful efforts to counteract prejudice and discrimination and promote social inclusion.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** – Provides a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- **Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous** – Contains an array of resources for individuals suffering from alcohol or drug dependence, respectively, and allows them to find and join a local chapter.
- **Al-Anon/Alateen and Nar-anon** – Provides community and support networks for family members of all ages who have been affected by substance use disorders.
- **Narconon** – Provides prevention, education, and rehabilitation programs for drug misuse and drug dependence.
- **SMART Recovery®** – Offers free, self-empowering, science-based mutual-help groups for abstaining from any substance or activity addiction.
- **American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry** – Promotes accessibility to quality treatment for all who need it, educates the public to influence public policy regarding addictive illness, and provides continuing education for addiction professionals.
- **American Psychiatric Association** – Works to ensure humane care and effective treatment is given to anyone with mental health problems, including intellectual disabilities and substance use disorders.
- **National Association for Children of Alcoholics** – Provides information and educational materials for children and families of people with alcohol or drug problems, as well as treatment professionals.
- **Mental Health America** – Offers resources about the realities of mental health and mental illness.

As health reform continues to be implemented, use the following resources to learn about the impact of these changes on access to treatment and recovery support services:

- **HealthCare.gov** – Managed by HHS; this Federal website provides information for the general public, people with disabilities, seniors, young adults, and employers, on how the law affects access to health care, insurance options, available preventive services, and comparing care quality.

- **Kaiser Family Foundation** – Issued by a nonprofit, health policy and communications group, this document provides a summary on the comprehensive health reform law, the Affordable Care Act, signed into law on March 23, 2010. The document discusses the law and subsequent changes, provisions to expand coverage, control health care costs, and improve the health care delivery system. Visit the Kaiser Family Foundation's Health Reform Source for more information.

- **The Parity Implementation Coalition's Parity Toolkit** – Created by organizations, including ***Recovery Month*** Planning Partners, this toolkit aids individuals seeking help, individuals in recovery, as well as their families, providers, and advocates in understanding their rights and benefits under the MHPAEA law.

Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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