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OCHN Recognizes National Prevention Week

(Oakland County, MI. -- May 13, 2025) - Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) joins the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in observing this week as National Prevention Week. This long-standing initiative underscores the importance of community-driven efforts to prevent substance use and promote mental health, with a special focus on underage drinking prevention.

According to the Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the percentage of students who reported consuming at least one alcoholic drink within the past 30 days decreased significantly from 30.5% in 2011 to 16.7% in 2021. Despite this progress, underage drinking remains a significant concern, with early initiation linked to increased risks of alcohol use disorder, impaired brain development, and other adverse outcomes.

“OCHN cares about its community, especially when we know young people are struggling with substance use,” said OCHN Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Dana Lasenby. “The power of prevention can positively affect lives, and OCHN is committed to doing whatever it takes to prevent substance use disorders from negatively impacting individuals. Whether it’s through peer support services, Narcan trainings, or therapy, we are here to help.”

Resources for Parents and Caregivers

OCHN encourages parents and caregivers to engage in open and ongoing conversations with their children about the risks of underage drinking. The “Talk. They Hear You.” campaign, developed by SAMHSA, offers valuable tools to assist in these discussions. Resources include:

- **Mobile App:** Provides conversation starters and tips for engaging youth in discussions about alcohol and other substances.
- **Screen4Success:** A tool to assess a child's well-being and identify areas where additional support may be needed.
- **“Parents’ Night Out” Toolkits:** Guides for hosting community events that equip parents with strategies to prevent underage drinking.

Support for Youth

For middle and high school students, OCHN recommends the following resources to build resilience and make informed choices:

- SAMHSA's National Helpline (1-800-662-HELP): Offers free, confidential assistance for individuals facing mental health or substance use challenges.
- Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (MCRUD): Provides educational materials and support for youth and families.

For immediate help, call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988. Non-emergency Access services can be reached at (248) 464-6363 or www.oaklandchn.org

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About OCHN

OCHN is contracted by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to lead a provider service network and manage care for approximately 30,000 Oakland County residents at more than 400 service sites across the county. People who receive public behavioral health services through OCHN's provider network include those who have an intellectual or developmental disability, mental health concerns, or substance use disorder. Most of these individuals have Medicaid insurance coverage.

OCHN's goal is to ensure these individuals are aware of and have access to services and supports that will improve their health and quality of life, as well as ensure their engagement in full community participation. Its mission to "inspire hope, empower people, and strengthen communities" reflects an unyielding belief in a "Valuable System for Valued People." Programs and supports provided by OCHN's service network are available at www.oaklandchn.org.