

Local Organizations to Advocate for Mental Health

Wichita, KS – March 5, 2018: Several members of the executive team from the Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas (MHA) will be traveling to Topeka on March 13 and 14 to advocate on behalf of mental health. “We are increasingly disturbed at the false connection that many politicians are trying to draw between gun violence and mental health.”, said Eric Litwiller, MHA’s Director of Communications. “People with mental illnesses are actually 12 times more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators. We need to continue educating people about the truth regarding mental health issues, instead of making people afraid of them just for political gain.”

During the course of these two days, representatives from non-profits throughout Kansas will be talking with elected officials about a range of topics from public health, to social services, to education and the arts. Contrary to popular belief, not-for-profit organizations are allowed to both advocate and lobby their elected officials, unless specifically outlawed by that particular organization’s charter or governing documents. They do, however, have to show those costs on their annual Form 990 filing.

“MHA will engage in a combination of advocacy and education, in accordance with our charter.”, says Mary Jones, MHA’s CEO. She sees this trip as a chance to educate the state’s leadership on issues connected to mental health, and ensure that their decisions are shaped by the facts, and not just what they see sensationalized on the nightly news. “Crime has little or no correlation to mental illness in the ways that is often talked about both in our state and federal capitals. In fact, it’s often an inverse relationship.”, she said. “But if they want to fund mental health, let them fund mental health. As long as they recognize that that is a completely separate conversation from gun violence.” In the city of Wichita alone, over 78,000 people will deal with a mental health concern in 2018, while funding to support the treatment for that many people is well short of where it needs to be.

For more information about the counseling services and other programs that MHA throughout south central Kansas, call 316.685.1821.

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Issued by Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas
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