

## **Mental Health Awareness Weeks**

Wichita, KS – March 19, 2018: March contains two awareness weeks that are particularly vital to sound mental health, according to Mental Health Association (MHA) of South Central Kansas' Director of Communications, Eric Litwiller. "Both Sleep Awareness Week and Brain Awareness Week occur in March, and both of these are extremely important for overall mental health."

According to Mental Health America, a national organization dedicated to improving education surrounding mental health issues, lack of sleep or low quality sleep has been linked to a range of concerns. Says Litwiller, "Poor sleep increases your risk of depression and anxiety disorders, and impaired memory. Not to mention more physical concerns like heart disease, cancer, weight gain, and reduction in the functioning of your immune system."

Brain awareness is also important because of the known links between genetics and certain mental health concerns. "The causes of mental illness are still poorly understood, and researchers are learning more every day. But we do know that nearly 30% of risk for mental illness can be accounted for by variations in common genes." According to Mental Health America, estimates for total heritability of disorders like ADHD and Bipolar disorder are as high as 75%, with Schizophrenia coming in at over 80%.

For more information about the counseling services and over 30 other programs that MHA offers related to these issues throughout south central Kansas, call 316.685.1821.

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