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DIRECTOR'S NEWS UPDATE



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Community Champions Initiative for Mental and Addictive Disorders

I am pleased to announce that the Oklahoma Department of Corrections will be partnering with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services as they launch a new program entitled "Community Champions Initiative for Mental and Addictive Disorders." The Community Champions Initiative is an awareness campaign created to address misunderstanding and misinformation related to addictive and mental disorders. The program consists of a pre-survey of attitudes, literature on basic descriptions of mental and addictive disorders, and a post-survey to measure change in attitudes.

The purpose of this awareness campaign is to generate discussion in Oklahoma workplaces and community organizations about mental and addictive disorders, creating an atmosphere of increased tolerance and understanding.

Oklahoma employers will spend more than \$600 million annually in additional medical costs for the 200,000 Oklahoma workers suffering from addiction and depression. Through this campaign, employers and employees will benefit directly; and their families and communities will benefit indirectly through this increased awareness of these individuals and their disorders.

I am truly excited to partner with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services as we believe such efforts will have a lasting impact on Oklahoma's public health and mental health care delivery systems. Representatives of ODMHSAS and Department of Corrections will be visiting work sites in the near future and I encourage all employees to participate in this joint venture. If you have questions about this program please call Karl Willett at 405-425-2504 or Bob Mann at 405-962-6137.