



Health and Human Services MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 1, 2016



Keep calm – Join free Community Wellness Walk CHAT promotes message of unity to end mental health stigma

SARASOTA COUNTY, FL — A free Community Wellness Walk will take place on Saturday, March 12 at 9 a.m. The meet-up location for walkers is at the gazebo at the Summit at Venice, 200 Nassau St. N. in Venice. Registration begins at 8 a.m.

The goal is to raise awareness about mental health to end the stigma. Organizers say physical activity is a great outlet for stress reduction and wellness.

Walkers donning green clothing and ribbons, the color of mental health awareness, will travel down Venice Avenue to Esplanade Avenue and back.

Leading the effort are members of the Laurel Osprey Venice Nokomis (LOVN) Community Health Action Team (CHAT), Coastal Behavioral Healthcare and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County.

“Living on the Suncoast, we are fortunate to have year-round weather and local amenities making it easier for people to walk and enjoy other forms of physical activity, says Tom Gosler, chair for the LOVN CHAT. “A healthy lifestyle is important to reducing anxiety and depression and helps in recovery from mental illness.”



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MEDIA NOTES:

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The Community Wellness Walk is designed to promote healthy lifestyles while drawing attention to mental health as a leading concern facing the community. "Through this active display of public support, the LOVN Community Health Action Team intends to help break down the stigma associated with mental illness and get people talking about mental health and wellness," said Robert Tabor, Director of Prevention Services with Coastal Behavioral Healthcare Inc.

Getting regular physical activity can help keep thinking, learning, and judgment skills sharp as we age. It can also improve our mood by reducing the risk of depression and may help promote better sleep according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

An information booth will be at the nearby Venice Farmers Market. Water and light refreshments as well as free giveaways will be provided to walkers.

About the Florida Department of Health

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