



Mental Health Advocacy Coalition

Changing minds, changing lives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ECONOMIC CRISES WILL PUSH DEMAND FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE

CLEVELAND - Weeks upon weeks of major economic woes will do more than take a toll on people's savings and fiscal well-being - it is also expected to result in an uptick in mental health needs.

Judy Peters, Chairwoman of the non-profit, Cleveland-based Mental Health Advocacy Coalition, said local officials need to prepare.

"People have lost their homes, their savings and maybe even a chunk of their hope," said Peters, who has more than 30 years experience working on issues involving mental health and mental illness. "There is a huge and growing amount of anxiety, and it's going to manifest itself in more distraction, more depression, more mental illness."

The American Psychological Association released a survey this month that said nearly half of Americans say their stress levels have increased since last year. Eight out of 10 people surveyed said the economy is a major cause of stress, up from 66 percent last April. Money and the economy are now the top sources of stress.

Peters was the featured speaker at an Oct. 10 gathering of local and state public officials, where she urged them to prepare for an increase in mental health needs. Officials need to know how to deal with mental health needs and how to refer people to the proper agencies.

Compounding the expected increase in mental health needs is a mental health network that is already spread thin due to lack of funds.

"Mental health often takes a back seat when it comes to public funding," Peters said. "Take it to the bank - these economic problems are too personal and too deep for there not to be a corresponding increase in mental health needs."

Ms. Peters is available for interviews. Call Steve Luttner at 216-696-1966 or Ms. Peters directly at 216-651-2037.

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