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## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

### IDPH Media Release

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**(Des Moines, IA)** May is Mental Health Awareness Month and The Iowa Departments of Public Health and Human Services, soon to be the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), are urging Iowans to prioritize their mental health. After the last two years of pandemic living, many people are realizing that stress, isolation, and uncertainty have taken a toll on their well-being. To coincide with Mental Health Awareness Month, the state is launching a multi-platform, multi-audience suicide prevention messaging campaign. The campaign targets Iowa youth as well as adults who are influential in the lives of young Iowans.

**There Are People Who Care** was developed for younger Iowans who might be experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Messages will run on platforms frequently used by a younger demographic, including TikTok, Snapchat, gaming apps and streaming television.

**Say Something About Suicide** is targeted to an older audience, encouraging them to say something if they notice the young person in their life is struggling. These ads will be placed on broadcast and streaming television as well as social media sites with an older audience demographic.

“Much of our work in mental health service delivery and suicide prevention is about reducing stigma. The first step is to reach out for support when you or someone you care about is struggling. You may not always know the exact right thing to say or do, but there are resources available through Your Life Iowa and others that help guide the process. Mental Health is part of our overall health, and is just as important as taking care of your physical health. We want Iowans to prioritize both,” said Kelly Garcia, Director of the Departments of Health and Human Services.

The call to action for both campaigns is to reach out to [Your Life Iowa](#). Your Life Iowa provides free, 24/7 support available for anyone dealing with mental health concerns, thoughts of suicide, substance use, problem alcohol use, or problem

gambling. In FY21, Your Life Iowa provided 31,089 contacts (phone text and chat), a 126% increase over fiscal year 2020. Adult mental health was the leading cause of the contacts, accounting for just over 30 percent of all contacts.

Approximately 470,000 adults in Iowa have a mental health condition, including 128,000 adults with a serious mental illness. More than half of people nationwide with a mental health condition do not receive treatment; cost was the deterrent for almost one third of Iowans who did not receive mental health care. There is no cost to contact Your Life Iowa and speak with a trained crisis counselor.

In addition to Your Life Iowa, beginning July 16, 2022, 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline will be available for people with concerns about mental health or suicide. Calls, texts and chats from Iowa will be routed to two local crisis centers, CommUnity Crisis Services and Foodbank in Iowa City and Foundation 2 in Cedar Rapids.

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