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New Toll-Free Number Provides Hope for South Carolinians
Mental Health, Alcohol & Drug Agencies Launch Statewide Support Line

Columbia, SC — The South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH), in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS), has today launched a statewide support line for individuals in need of mental health or substance use services in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The support line, which can be reached 24/7, statewide, toll-free, at **1 (844) SC-HOPES (724-6737)**, will connect callers to trained clinicians who can address their specific needs.

This resource is being made possible by an emergency COVID-19 grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Approximately 58 million Americans are living with mental health and/or substance use disorders, and SAMHSA officials believe that the COVID-19 crisis will contribute to growth in these numbers. The support line's focus is assisting people who are experiencing new or increased symptoms of mental health or substance use disorders as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. SC HOPES also aims to reach and assist workers who remain on the front lines of the crisis, like healthcare providers, who are at increased risk of issues like post-traumatic stress.

"COVID-19 has affected us all," said SCDMH State Director Kenneth M. Rogers, MD. "People who never experienced mental illness or substance use disorders before COVID may find themselves in a confusing and scary place when these issues arise, and folks who live with these conditions every day may see their symptoms increase or worsen. SC HOPES is here to ensure anyone who needs help gets guidance and support."

"This new toll-free line is so important, because human connection during this pandemic is essential," said DAODAS Director Sara Goldsby. "We want everyone in South Carolina to know that this connection to hope and to help is available. And it is crucial that those in need know that financial assistance is available for the services they might require."

For up-to-date COVID-19 news and data, safety information, and more visit accelerate.sc.gov or the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's dedicated COVID-19 page at scdhec.gov/covid19.

The Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services is the cabinet agency charged with ensuring the provision of quality services to prevent or reduce the negative consequences of substance use and addictions. To accomplish this goal, the department contracts with a broad network of service providers and recovery organizations, highlighted by a system of 32 public agencies that provide prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery services in all 46 counties.

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health's mission is to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses, giving priority to adults with serious and persistent mental illness and children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances. As South Carolina's public mental health system, it provides outpatient mental health services through a network of 16 community mental health centers and associated clinics, serving all 46 counties, and psychiatric hospital services via three State hospitals, including one for substance use treatment. In addition to mental health services, the Agency provides long-term care services in one community nursing care center and three State veterans' nursing homes.

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