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Youth Receiving Mental Health Services Also Get Help for “Kicking the Habit”

Cuyahoga County, Ohio – Helping youth receiving mental health services to “kick the habit” of nicotine dependence is now available at Ohio Mentor, Inc., a provider agency of the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board (CCCMHB). Funding for this treatment program is provided through a grant from the Ohio Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Foundation, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

An official Kick-Off of the new tobacco cessation program will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 18, 2006, at Ohio Mentor’s Valley View Office, 9800 Rockside Rd, #800, Valley View, Ohio. The Kick-off is the first step in educating staff, provider agencies and the public about this revolutionary treatment initiative.

“Research indicates that 44% of all cigarettes are smoked by individuals with mental illness, including youth. Persons diagnosed with a mental illness are more likely to die from tobacco-related illness than a drug addiction, and also live with multiple health problems which are made worse by tobacco use,” “stated William M. Denihan, CEO of the CCCMHB, as he explained why the CCCMHB agreed to be fiscal agent for the grant.

On January 1, 2006, Ohio Mentor, Inc. became a tobacco-free agency, meaning that all clients living with mental illness may address their tobacco use in an effort to reduce its negative health effects. Lisa Clark, Children’s and Mental Health Program Administrator for Ohio Mentor, Inc., explained that the tobacco cessation program will be offered to all youth who receive Ohio Mentor, Inc. services. In addition, Ohio Mentor staff using tobacco will be offered the American Lung Association’s Freedom From Smoking Program, as well as reimbursement for Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) co-pays.

The process of going tobacco-free took nearly five months to prepare and was assisted by The Ohio Department of Mental Health, Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and the Ohio Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Foundation. Ohio Mentor, Inc., is certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health. The agency provides Mental Health Assessments, Behavioral Counseling and Therapy, Community Psychiatric Support Services, and Pharmacological Management. For further information call Lisa Clark, at 216-525-1885.

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