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PRESS RELEASE

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LACDMH PROMOTES MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH WITH CONGRESSWOMAN NAPOLITANO AND LA LAKER METTA WORLD PEACE

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park and Sunburst Youth Academy Foundation are sponsoring a special event to raise awareness about mental health. This free community event will be held on **May 21, 10 a.m. to Noon, El Monte Airport, 4233 Santa Anita Ave., El Monte, CA 91731.**

The event will feature special guests, performances, informational booths, and free mental health resources.

- LACDMH Acting Director, **Robin Kay**, Ph.D., will welcome the crowd and introduce distinguished speakers.
- Congresswoman **Grace Napolitano**, co-chair of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, who will address the importance of raising awareness around the stigma associated with mental health.
- **Metta World Peace**, Los Angeles Laker, will speak about his journey and struggle with mental health. As founder of Xcel University, he will discuss the work being done to encourage kids to further their education and advocacy for mental health awareness and quality mental health services for everyone.
- **Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre Department** will host an interactive activity to highlight skill building techniques from their theatrical production, "It's Stop Time," focusing on conflict management for upper elementary students and their families. The audience will learn how to use the "Stop" "Breathe" "Choose" method for managing conflict.

- A variety of informational booths focusing on mental health services and advocacy including NAMI, Pacific Clinics, LA County Department of Mental Health, and others will be available.

The event is open to the community. RSVP at **METTAWORLDPEACE.EVENTBRITE.COM**

“I'm very happy to participate in this mental health awareness event, because events like this one help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health,” says Metta World Peace. “It is vital that we educate our communities and let people know there is nothing wrong with seeking out help when you need it. It is especially important for our youth to understand that it is actually ‘cool’ to take care of yourself, and to direct them to the free resources available within their communities.”

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is the largest county-operated mental health department in the United States, directly operating programs in more than 85 sites, and providing services via contract program and DMH staff at approximately 300 sites co-located with other County departments, schools, courts and other organizations. Each year, the County contracts with more than 1,000 organizations and individual practitioners to provide a variety of mental health-related services. On average, more than 260,000 County residents of all ages are served every year. The Department’s mission -- enriching lives through partnership to strengthen our community’s capacity to support recovery and resiliency – is accomplished by working with stakeholders and community partners to provide clinically competent, culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate mental health services to clients in the least restrictive setting.

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