

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH
By Kathleen Piché, L.C.S.W., Public Affairs Director



May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and is intended to raise awareness about mental health and related issues. Although attitudes appear to be changing around the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness, negative attitudes have existed since the late 1940's, when the first National Mental Health Awareness Week was launched. In the 1960's, the campaign was extended to an entire month in May. During this month, we are encouraged to take responsibility for preventing mental illness by making positive lifestyle choices in thought and action before problems manifest. This year, the LACDMH Public Information Office is promoting some exciting events and tools to support hope, wellness and recovery with clients, families and communities in Los Angeles County.

Univision Telethon: LACDMH has partnered with Univision to host a phone bank/telethon on **Thursday, May 29th from 5:30PM-11:30PM** on **Channel 34** in Los Angeles at the Univision studios. This event will help create awareness and discussion of mental health issues affecting Spanish-speaking communities. The telethon will be simultaneously viewed live in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura

and Kern counties. Nearly 40 Spanish-speaking volunteers will participate in answering calls and giving information and making mental health referrals, including the ACCESS line (1-800-854-7771).

Since January, 2014, LACDMH and Univision have worked together on a bi-weekly segment for its nightly news show, entitled “Una Mente, Una Vida,” a discussion of mental health issues and decreasing the stigma associated with the diagnosis of mental illness. Julio Cesar Ortiz, M.F.T., Univision Reporter, and the LACDMH Public Information Office (PIO), collaborate on the project. Univision reaches over 2 million viewers during the weekend broadcasts. To watch a segment of “Una Mente, Una Vida,” click here: <http://t.co/wYs8HtsWbj>.

In April and May, LACDMH is promoting ***Know the Signs***, a statewide suicide prevention campaign that targets susceptible groups, including young African American men, young Latinas and older Caucasian males. *Know the Signs* is built on messages of knowing the signs that lead to suicide, finding the words to talk about it and reaching out to those who may need help. For more information, see www.suicideispreventable.org.

Lastly, we continue to support **Lime Green Ribbon** campaign for mental health awareness. The lime green ribbon is associated with good mental health care and may motivate individuals and families to seek assistance for mental health, primary care and substance use issues, with the goal of eliminating the concurrent stigma and discrimination that accompany those seeking help.