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Attn: Community Editors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Highlighting mental health during Black History Month

**OAKLAND COUNTY, MI (February 1, 2022)** – In recognition of February being Black History Month, Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) is joining its community partners in reflecting on the achievements of African Americans, while also promoting pathways to improvement in mental health outcomes.

According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, African Americans are more likely to experience serious mental health problems than the general population.

“As a community mental health organization, it’s important to address mental health in the African American community – not just in February, but throughout the entire year,” states Dana Lasenby, OCHN executive director and chief executive officer. “Recognizing and providing solutions for these disparities can inspire meaningful conversations that promote change.”

Below are information resources to learn more about African American mental health and wellness:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) highlights the [African American Mental Health page](#) with stories, resources, and statistics related to mental health and the African American community, including ways to find help.
- Mental Health America (MHA) features a [comprehensive guide to Black & African American Communities and Mental Health](#) with information related to attitudes, demographics, treatment issues, educational and help-related resources.
- View the [28+ ways to celebrate Black History Month](#) developed by the OCHN Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

OCHN has also implemented robust Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training and education opportunities for its employees and service provider network. The goal is to cultivate a culturally competent and sensitive service delivery system that promotes dignity for and protects the rights of marginalized populations.

### **About OCHN**

OCHN leads a provider service network that assists approximately 23,000 Oakland County citizens at more than 300 service sites across the county. People who receive public mental health services through OCHN's provider network include those who have an intellectual or developmental disability, mental health challenge, or substance use disorder. The majority of these individuals have Medicaid insurance coverage.

OCHN's goal is to ensure these individuals are aware of and have access to services and supports that will improve their health and quality of life, as well as ensure their engagement in full community participation. Its mission to "inspire hope, empower people, and strengthen communities" reflects an unyielding belief in a "Valuable System for Valued People." Programs and supports provided by OCHN's service network are available at [www.oaklandchn.org](http://www.oaklandchn.org).

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