

Public invited to behavioral health forums

Monday, November 23, 2009

COTTONWOOD -- The Verde Valley Guidance Clinic, in conjunction with five other local agencies and organizations, has announced a series of public information events designed to inform area residents about the availability of behavioral health services in the Verde Valley and Sedona.

The first event of the series, titled *Communities in Recovery*, will begin at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, in the Community Room at the Verde Valley Guidance Clinic's Cottonwood campus.

In addition to the Clinic, other participants are Recovery Innovations of Arizona, Mingus Center, NAZCARE, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the Arizona Department of Economic Security.

A representative from each organization will take part in a panel discussion on the availability of services, eligibility requirements, and other information.

According to Richard Dehnert, Community Relations Coordinator for the Verde Valley Guidance Clinic, these discussions will be helpful to anyone seeking or receiving help for themselves or for family members and loved ones.

"Many times I hear people say there is a lack of services for people seeking help with addictions, substance abuse disorders, mental illness and other behavioral health issues" he said. "This program will help people get the facts about the services available in our communities."

Future programs will address specific services and treatment modalities offered by the participating agencies and organizations. "We hope that by bringing all of these groups together, we can make navigating the system easier for consumers, their families, and friends," said Dehnert. "There are services available, and we hope to educate the public on how to access them. With the economy putting a strain on families and individuals and the Holidays upon us, we feel this is a good time to start this informational series."

The subsequent programs, which will be held the second Wednesday of each month, will highlight the individual organizations, giving detailed information on the array of services, eligibility requirements, and other information which will help consumers and families make informed choices when seeking treatment and support.

The programs are open to the public and will each last about two hours, including time for questions from the audience. Light refreshments will be served.

The Verde Valley Guidance Clinic Cottonwood Campus is at 8 E. Cottonwood St.

The Community Room is in the Clinic's Building A. For more information, contact Richard Dehnert at 634-2236.