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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **May is Mental Health Matters Awareness Month**

*Behavioral Health Services Encourages Residents to Learn More about Community Resources*

**Stockton, CA. – May 2, 2022** – The month of May is a time when San Joaquin County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) joins the national movement in raising awareness about mental illness and address the stigma surrounding it.

“Our mental health has a powerful influence on our quality of life. It affects how we feel, how we see ourselves, how we handle stress and make choices, and how we relate to others,” said Tony Vartan, BHS Director. “We have targeted services for the 0-5 population, children, adolescents, adults, and older adults with locations throughout the county. BHS is constantly adapting its services to best meet our community’s diverse needs.”

This month there is renewed focus on the actions we can take in San Joaquin County to support our own mental health and the mental health of individuals we serve.

More than half of all Americans experience a mental illness or disorder in their lifetime. In recent years, stress, depression, and anxiety have become much more common due to the pandemic, social isolation, and transitions back to school and work. It can be difficult to know what to do when we or our family, friends, or peers have these experiences.

To learn about mental health resources in San Joaquin County, call the Access Line at 209-468-9370 and follow the BHS social media handles on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SJCBHS> and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/SJCBHS>.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis or contemplating suicide, call the BHS 24-Hour Crisis-Line at 209-468-8686.

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The mission of San Joaquin County Behavioral Health Services is to partner with the community to provide integrated, culturally, and linguistically competent mental health and substance use disorder services to meet the prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery needs of San Joaquin County residents.