

**Press Release: January 28, 2010**  
**Eating Disorders Awareness Month**  
**Anna Lemmerman, Community Relations Manager (845)342-2400 x236**

## **FEBRUARY IS EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS MONTH**

Did you know that more than more than 10 million females and 1 million males are fighting a life and death battle with an eating disorder such as anorexia or bulimia? Approximately 15 million more are struggling with binge eating disorder.

The Orange County Eating Disorders Coalition, an initiative of Mental Health Association in Orange County, Inc. (MHA) is aware of these struggles and is working hard to assist residents in reaching their wellness goals. The Eating Disorders Coalition believes education and awareness are essential in combating this illness. February has been designated Eating Disorders Awareness month with special attention given to National Eating Disorders Awareness **Week which is February 21 through the 27<sup>th</sup>**.

The goal of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week is to attract public and media attention to the seriousness of eating disorders and the pressures, attitudes and behaviors that contribute to them.

The Orange County Eating Disorders Coalition along with NEDA (National Eating Disorders Association) is stressing the importance of talking about eating disorders which is why the national theme this year is: ***It's Time to Talk About It!***

By talking about eating disorders you are opening the doors of communication and showing your dedication to help. **The goals of this initiative are to:**

1. Raise awareness that eating disorders are serious illnesses that arise from a combination of long-standing issues. Fighting our natural size and shape can lead to unhealthy dieting practices, poor body image and decreased self-esteem. Eating disorders may begin with preoccupations with food and weight; and is about much more than food.
2. Prevention, education and access to resources are crucial. The Orange County Eating Disorders Coalition has an extensive list of therapists, support groups and educational outreaches. MHA has a confidential online screening tool for eating disorders and has provided a list of resources available to the public. Just go to [www.mhaorangeny.com](http://www.mhaorangeny.com) and click on the Eating Disorders Treatment and Referral List located to the left of the home page. Additional information regarding the Coalition is also accessible from this website.

3. Help is available and recovery is possible. While eating disorders are serious and can be life threatening, recovery is possible. It is important for those affected to remember that they are not alone in their struggle; others have recovered and are now living healthy fulfilling lives.

Orange County has planned exciting activities during February that are free and open to the public. We encourage all members of the community to take advantage of our trainings and outreaches. Planned events are as follows:

- An educational workshop titled, “*One Size Doesn’t Fit All*”, presented by Susan Piowaty, LCSWR. The workshop will take place at Orange County Emergency Services Center, 22 Wells Farm Rd, Goshen, NY on February 24<sup>th</sup> from 9-12pm and is free of charge. Please call the MHA @ (845)342-2400 to register. You must be registered to attend.
- The Mental Health Association in Orange County, Inc. will have an informational table set up for your viewing throughout the month. Office hours are from 9am-5pm, please stop in for free brochures and resources. MHA is located at 73 County Highway 108, Middletown, NY. Please call 342-2400 for directions or access the 24 hour crisis Helpline @ 1-800-832-1200.
- The office of Dr. Michelle Winchester Vega & Associates located at 339 Blooming Grove Tpke, New Windsor, NY will have a literature table available for the month of February. Additionally, Dianna Chillo, LCSWR who will be providing Q & A on February 23 from 12-1pm and 6:30-7:30pm. Please call the office at (845)548-76014 for additional information.
- The Recovery Center located at 11 Hamilton Avenue, in Monticello, N.Y. will be disseminating information regarding eating disorders as well as ongoing support group schedules, please call Joanna Gersten @ (845)794-8080 for additional information.

If you would like to join in the prevention and education efforts please consider joining the Eating Disorders Coalition. The next scheduled meeting will take place on: April, 13, 2010, 9am at Mental Health Association in Orange County. The Coalition meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month, on a quarterly basis. For any question please call MHA @ (845)342-2400.