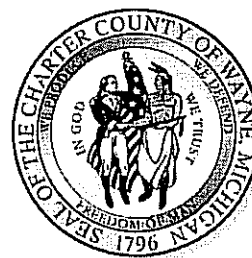




**Detroit-Wayne County  
Community Mental Health Agency**

*Always here... whenever you need us.*



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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March 11, 2008  
For Immediate Release

### **Mental Health Agency recognizes Developmental Disabilities Month – March 2008**

The month of March is designated as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, around 190,000 children and adults in Michigan are incapacitated with either a physical or cognitive disability and in some cases both. The Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency (DWCCMHA) serves nearly 7,500 of those persons through various specialty service provider organizations and programs. The Agency supports programs and services that value optimizing independence for developmentally disabled consumers based on their unique situations and ability to lead fulfilling *self-determined* lives. The concept behind *self-determination* represents a practice which supports individuals to participate fully in decisions about themselves, upholding four basic principles; 1) the freedom to exercise the same rights as other citizens, 2) authority to direct the funding needed for their services and supports, 3) support through the organization of resources as determined by the persons with the disability, and 4) responsibility to use public dollars wisely. The Agency embraces all four of the principals of self determination and further recognizes that each individual has very unique desires and needs to live a self directed life. The Agency pursues providers who can then match such unique services that add value to consumers existing strengths, and their natural supports system. "Our work and service reflects that we believe everyone has an infinite capacity to develop their quality of life given the proper tools, assistance, resources and opportunity. We recognize this all year round, not merely during the month of March," states Acting Director Veda Sharp.

## Mini-Grant Opportunities Available at *Erasing Stigma* Conference

The Agency will release mini-grant opportunities as a part of Developmental Disabilities awareness Month. The mini-grants help to support developmental disability awareness activity year round. Applications for the grants coincide with the Agency's groundbreaking conference *Erasing Stigma*, which will be held on **Tuesday March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency Dearborn** featuring Dr. Terry Cline, Director of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and former US Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher. A portion of the program will lend opportunity for discussion amongst persons who have experienced discrimination because of their disability.