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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Honorable Dorene S. Allen Receives “Go To Bat” Award

December 23, 2015 - Community Mental Health for Central Michigan (CMHCM) is pleased to announce that Honorable Dorene S. Allen is a recipient of this year’s Michigan Association of CMH Boards’ (MACMHB) “Go To Bat” Award. The award is presented to an individual outside of the public mental health system who exemplifies extraordinary concern, advocacy or leadership aimed at improving the quality and quantity of community-based mental health services for persons with mental illness and developmental disabilities in Michigan.

Judge Allen, presiding judge of Midland County’s family and probate courts, was nominated due to her contributions in working to promote services to children with severe emotional disturbance and substance use disorders. Since her election in 2001, Judge Allen has reorganized Midland’s juvenile programs so that youth could be treated and housed in their home county rather than being placed in other counties or other states to receive the treatment they need.

“Community Mental Health for Central Michigan is grateful for our strong partnership with Judge Allen and her advocacy and compassion for the welfare of Midland’s most vulnerable citizens is worthy of this honor,” said John Obermesik, CMHCM Executive Director. “CMHCM extends its sincere congratulations to Judge Allen as the recipient of the MACMHB “Go To Bat” Award!”

Judge Allen engaged with CMHCM to bring two evidence-based programs to Midland – Multi-Systemic Therapy for juveniles with delinquency and/or problem sexual behaviors and Baby Court, an intensive infant mental health program for reunification of infants and toddlers with their parents. As a result of the success of these and other programs initiated in the juvenile care center, Midland County’s juvenile delinquency rate has decreased by 81 percent since 1998, while, at the same time, there has been a treatment cost savings. Midland County residential treatment costs for juvenile offenders have dramatically declined by 98.9 percent since 2004. Judge Allen has more recently worked in collaboration with CMHCM and other private providers to make sure all Midland County youth have access to treatment for substance use disorders. Judge Allen and CMHCM Board member, Richard Dolinski, worked to gain

funding to support these agencies in training staff in Brief Strategic Family Therapy, an evidence-based practice that has shown to positively impact substance use in both youth and their family members. All youth received a thorough evaluation and treatment with payment removed as a possible barrier. All programs have ongoing evaluation for their effectiveness through collaboration with the Legacy Center for Community Success. Youth who have completed the program have improved documented outcomes, but more importantly, they have stayed in school and away from drugs.

In addition to working closely with CMHCM, Judge Allen also works with many other agencies to assist children. It's obvious by her actions that she cares deeply about youth and is compassionate for all juveniles that happen to be part of the court system.

CMHCM services a six-county area: Clare, Isabella, Gladwin, Mecosta, Midland, and Osceola. The mission of CMHCM is to promote community inclusion and optimal recovery through provision of comprehensive and quality integrated services to individuals with a mental illness, developmental disability, and/or substance use disorder. More information is available at www.cmhcm.org

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