



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Jason Brame (jasonb@communityadvocates.net); (414) 270-2951

JUNE 29 SYMPOSIUM IN RACINE TO EXPLORE MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT

Milwaukee (June 3, 2010)—A panel of leading mental health and substance use disorder experts from southeastern Wisconsin will discuss the major statewide policy changes needed to improve treatment in the state. **Making Parity Real: Southeastern Wisconsin will be held in Racine from 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 29 at Gateway Technical College (1001 S. Main St., Racine). Attendance is free but registration is required by Thursday, June 24. For more information and to register visit www.MakingParityReal.org.**

Symposium co-hosts will be Rep. Cory Mason (D-Racine), Rep. Sandy Pasch (D-Whitefish Bay) and David Riemer, Community Advocates Public Policy Institute director.

Through moderated discussion, area experts—treatment providers, advocates, the recovery community, consumers and law enforcement officials—will explore the changes that can be made to state laws, budgets, rules and regulations, and standards to increase access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment. Issues include the quantity, cultural competency and location of treatment providers; strategies to reduce stigma; the adequacy of public and private funding sources; the ability of non-medical providers to administer treatment; and other non-financial barriers to receiving treatment services.

The public is encouraged to attend Making Parity Real and share their views on how to improve treatment coverage, access and outcomes. The symposium will also feature updates on federal and state parity laws and regulations, including the *Wisconsin Parity Act* (2009 Wisconsin Act 218), which Gov. Jim Doyle signed into law April 29.

Making Parity Real is a statewide series; symposia have been held in Milwaukee, Green Bay, Wausau, Janesville and La Crosse. Based on information learned during the series, the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute plans to present state lawmakers and policymakers with recommendations to close Wisconsin's treatment gaps. Making Parity Real is sponsored by the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute, Grassroots Empowerment Project, Disability Rights-Wisconsin and the National Alliance on Mental Illness-Wisconsin.