

May is mental health awareness month

An estimated 26.2% of Americans ages 18 and older—about 1 in 4 adults—suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. Four of the 10 leading causes of disability in the United States are mental disorders. Major depressive disorder causes the greatest disability with women impacted at twice the rate of men. Many people experience more than one mental disorder at a given time. Like adults, children and adolescents have mental health disorders affecting 1 in 5 at any given time.

May is Mental Health Awareness month, and to mark this annual observance and to raise awareness of mental health issues, the office of Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton has released a report titled “Women and Depression in Wisconsin.” This report was produced by a Task Force on Women and Depression in Wisconsin that she convened as part of her Wisconsin Women = Prosperity initiative.*

In addition to the report, a number of activities are scheduled around

the state to increase awareness of mental health issues and to promote an anti-stigma message. These events are a joint effort between Lieutenant Governor Lawton and Wisconsin United for Mental Health (WUMH), a partnership of public and private organizations created to help educate Wisconsin residents about mental illness and to reduce stigma. The Wisconsin Medical Society is just one of the group’s steering committee members, and Lieutenant Governor Lawton is an honorary co-chair. Other Steering Committee Members include the Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation, the Wisconsin Departments of Health and Family Services and Work Force Development, HOPES, and the Mental Health Association in Milwaukee County.

More information about mental health and anti-stigma efforts is available on the WUMH Web site, along with a link to free, confidential, on-line screening tools. In this month especially, we urge physicians to talk to their patients about mental health issues, and please visit our Web site: www.wimentalhealth.org to learn more.

*Julie Whitehorse and Rebecca Cohen
Wisconsin United for Mental Health
Co-Chairs*

**Editor’s Note: The report’s Executive Summary will be included in the next issue of the Wisconsin Medical Journal, and the entire report is available on-line at <http://www.ltgov.state.wi.us>.*

Wisconsin Medical Journal

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