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For Immediate Release

**JUST CARE FAMILY NETWORK, A GRANT PROGRAM OF SHELBY COUNTY,
TO HOLD TOWN HALL MEETING, MAY 30**

(Memphis, Tennessee) – May 15, 2012 – Providing help and support for children’s mental illness is the focus of a Town Hall Meeting, Wednesday, May 30, 2012, 6-9 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 1000 South Cooper, Memphis, Tennessee 38104. The town hall meeting is held as part of National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week, May 4-10, 2012. Just Care Family Network (JCFN), in partnership with Shelby County Government, is the sponsor of the May 30 town hall meeting. The topic of the JCFN Town Hall Meeting is "Children's Mental Health in Memphis: Overcoming Trauma, Building Resilience."

Shelby County ranks near the bottom as measured by most health-related indicators, and no community has a greater stake in addressing the toxic stress that predisposes children to health problems and adversely affects how their brains process information. When a child experiences traumatic stress and has neither the option of flight or fight, their terror in the face of helplessness results in a freeze. Trauma is fear frozen in the body. Babies can even be born traumatized at birth. Children suffering from traumatic stress generally have ongoing emotional symptoms and difficulty regulating their behaviors.

Based on national estimates, there could be as many as 22,000 children with a serious emotional disturbance (SED) in Shelby County, and more than two-thirds are not getting the help they need. Too often, these children wind up in a principal’s office, police station, or juvenile court rather than in the care of a community provider able to effectively support them. While most communities lack the resources to meet the needs of children with SED, Shelby County offers a broad range of both mental health and other support services for children and their families. Unfortunately, these support services are extremely underused, oftentimes by those who need them the most.

The public is urged to attend the town hall meeting to identify issues related to childhood trauma; learn about available system of care services in Memphis and Shelby County; and, take part in developing solutions to the problems facing children and families dealing with mental illnesses. Just Care Family Network staff and partners, along with affected youth and families, will facilitate the discussion as part of a month-long series of events related to children’s mental health and wellness.

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The month-long commemoration of Children's Mental Health Awareness Week began with the regular **JCFN Full Partnership Meeting** on **May 10, 2012**, at **First Baptist Church – Broad, 2835 Broad Ave., Memphis, Tennessee**, featuring a mayoral proclamation and announcement of the formal transition of JCFN to management by the Shelby County Division of Community Services.

The Just Care Family Network is funded through a collaborative agreement between the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health. The Just Care Family Network helps children and their families exercise their voice and choice in navigating the programs that are offered by various agencies creating an integrated state plan for treatment support and cultural and linguistic competence, including individualized plans of care, enhanced rights protections, better criminal and juvenile justice diversion, and increased access to mental health services.

For more information, contact Dr. Altha Stewart at Just Care Family Network, ajstewartmd@bellsouth.net, (901) 454-7262 phone, or Dr. Jerry Watson (601) 953-5515.

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NOTE: Due to the sensitive nature of the story and considering there will be children and families affected by mental illness present for all events, media is asked to use discretion for all photography, videography and interviews.