

Global Recognition Day Planned for Peer Supporters
First Annual Celebration on Thursday, October 15, 2015



TRUFANT, Mich.—The important roles and value of people helping others in the mental health and addictions fields will be the focus of a Global Peer Supporter Celebration Day.

“Peer supporters are individuals who are well along in their recovery journeys from mental health and/or addiction challenges who help others on their journeys,” according to Steve Harrington, Executive Director of the International Association of Peer Supporters (iNAPS). “This is a relatively new profession that has quickly proven to be cost effective in the treatment of these disorders.”

There are more than 10,000 peer supporters in the U.S. and more in Canada, Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom and other countries. They work in hospitals, human service agencies, governments, and jails and prisons. Peer supporters often facilitate support groups and meet with individuals one-on-one. They also provide community education about mental health and addiction disorders to combat the stigma that often prevents people from seeking help for these conditions.

Organized by iNAPS, the recognition day has been set for Thursday, Oct. 15, 2015.

The purpose of the peer supporter recognition day is to increase awareness of who peer supporters are, what they do and the many valuable contributions they make to human services.

Peer supporters and others in the behavioral health field are encouraged to participate by asking state and local governments to pass formal resolutions recognizing the roles and

value of peer supporters, create celebration events such as gatherings in public areas, schedule presentations for local civic groups and schools, create exhibits and host information booths in shopping malls and public buildings and write articles for newspapers and magazines about peer support.

iNAPS is also encouraging peer supporters to join in a moment of celebration at Noon on Oct. 15 to celebrate the contributions of peer supporters.

“Recovery from mental health and addictions is now an expectation and peer support is an important part of that recovery,” Harrington said. “Years of research has shown that those with lived experience with these issues can inspire hope and support to those still struggling with the effects of these often devastating disorders.”