



Ohio Department of Mental Health

NEWS RELEASE

Bob Taft
Governor

For immediate release: Tuesday, July 25, 2006

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Director

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Northeast Ohio teen serves on Governor's mental health transformation committee

(Columbus) Matthew Mikolic has been appointed as the youth representative to the State of Ohio's Mental Health Transformation Working Group. The Transformation Working Group includes representation from all state agencies affected by mental health issues and consumers and families.

The cabinet-level group was formed by Governor Bob Taft after Ohio received a \$12 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to help better serve people with mental illnesses and emotional disorders. Ohio was one of seven states to receive the grant funding. The group will work to evaluate and improve the state's approach to mental health care.

"I am so pleased with and appreciative of Matt's participation on the Transformation Working Group," said Michael F. Hogan, Ph.D., Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health. "We can not move forward in transforming our mental health system without the voice of a youth who has been there. From his own experiences, Matt has shared a number of suggestions for improving care in Ohio."

Mikolic is an 18-year-old senior in high school from Eastlake, Ohio. He was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder at age 8.

"I am one of the people that are able to say I have an illness and not look at it as an issue, but as a gift to help others," Mikolic said. "I would like to take all my experiences I have been through and learn from them and teach others what I have learned from it. I believe this is my role in life. I love doing it."

Additional information about Ohio's grant to transform the mental health system is available online at www.anewdayohio.org and additional information about Matthew Mikolic is available at <http://www.steppingstonesmentalhealth.com/matt.shtml>.

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For more information, contact Laura Wentz or Jason Fallon at (614) 466-2297.

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