



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stephen Madarasz

518-598-4705, stephen.madarasz@gmail.com

**SAMHSA Assistant Secretary to Participate in Upcoming National Conference -
Progress Made Possible at the Intersection of Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice**

MIAMI, FL – October 24, 2017 - Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, MD, PhD, recently confirmed to serve as the head of the federal government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), will join other national leaders at an upcoming conference - **Progress Made Possible: Better Outcomes at the Intersection of Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice**, to be held in Miami, FL. December 3-5, 2017. This Conference is being hosted by the Institute for Behavioral Healthcare Improvements, with support from the Mental Health Foundation.

As the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Abuse in the federal Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. McCance-Katz advises the Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary on improving Behavioral Health Care in America and leads SAMHSA's efforts.

The Institute for Behavioral Healthcare Improvement (IBHI) with support from the Mental Health Foundation, is presenting the conference. It will showcase the remarkable progress that can be achieved when community leaders and other stakeholders work together to better coordinate efforts and integrate programs. This is IBHI's second national conference.

"Communities across the country are struggling with behavioral health challenges but there are places where the right set of leaders are coming together and making progress," said Stuart Buttlair, President of the IBHI Board of Directors. "We can learn from each other and having Secretary McCance-Katz join us provides a great opportunity for meaningful national dialogue."

The conference will also feature the Hon. Steven Leifman, Associate Administrative Judge, Miami-Dade County, who has earned national recognition for his tireless reform work to bring people together to improve the Florida's criminal justice and behavioral health systems. His keynote address and other program presentations will highlight Miami's story. It is an example of what is possible with a city's dedication and hard work to improve conditions and help people. The conference will also provide opportunities for participants to tour facilities and ride-along with Crisis Intervention Teams.

The conference will focus on model practices underway in communities around the country to help individuals and strengthen communities by diverting individuals in need away from jails and emergency departments and into more effective help. The models stress the importance of peer to peer programs, crisis intervention teams and evidence based practices for better outcomes.

The program is targeted at public officials, public safety leaders, behavioral health advocates and providers. Sessions covering a range of Best Practice experiences from communities across the country will also be featured including presentations from representatives of the National Association of Counties and the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

IBHI is a not-for-profit organization focused on promoting the use of evidence based practices to improve outcomes for people, families and communities facing the challenges of behavioral health problems. The Mental Health Foundation is also a not-for-profit organization with a mission to support best practices that help end stigma associated with behavioral health.

For full information and registration visit www.ibhi.net or www.mentalhealthfoundation.net.