



## National Children's Mental Health Awareness Timeline *Maine Joins Awareness Movement in 1996*

**1949:** The National Mental Health Association (now Mental Health America) launches Mental Health Week.

**1950-60s:** Congress creates and funds the *Commission on Mental Illness and Mental Health*. The Community Mental Health Centers Act calls for deinstitutionalization and increased community services. Special emphasis is placed on educating the public around mental illness and inviting them to state hospitals and other locations to learn more. In the late 1960's, Congress declares May national Mental Health Awareness month.

**1970's:** Annual Mental Health Awareness observances shift to community-based events as state hospital "patients" transition to community-based settings.

**1991:** A parent-driven coalition in Missouri launches "*Children's Mental Health Awareness Week*" to raise awareness and reduce stigma. Within five years, Kansas, Illinois, Ohio, Massachusetts and Maine develop celebrations. The National Federation of Families for Children's Metal Health (NFFCMH) joins the coalition.

**1996:** Maine's statewide totally parent run organization, G.E.A.R. Parent Network kicks off the state's first Children's Mental Health Awareness Week with a coffee tailgate event. State leaders, providers, parents and community members celebrate families' journeys to greater emotional health and wellness. G.E.A.R. staff and families hand tie green yarn and distribute to raise awareness of children's mental health and available services.

**2004:** NFFCMH declares the 1st week of May as Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, and encourages its chapters and state organizations (including G.E.A.R. Parent Network) to initiate advocacy and awareness efforts.

**2006:** The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services launches "*National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day*" during the annual Awareness Week.

**2007:** NFFCMH announces an annual "*Green Ribbon Campaign*." Green symbolized insanity 200 years ago. Today, its usage symbolizes new beginnings. The ribbons help spread awareness and dialogue nationally and internationally. Maine switches from yarn to ribbons embossed with "***Children's Mental Health Matters***".

**2008:** Maine's Children's Behavioral Health Services (CBHS) institutes a formal celebration at the State House Hall of Flags co-sponsored by G.E.A.R. and THRIVE Initiative. The Governor proclaims the first week of May as Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. The Hall of Flags event is also supported by the seven-member Maine Alliance of Family Organizations and Youth MOVE Maine. Youth and family members speak on resiliency, intergenerational resiliency, and the benefits of family organizations and natural supports.

**2009-11:** Maine's Children's Mental Health Planning Committee endorsed a bi-annual "*What Families and Youth Want Conference*" organized by G.E.A.R. Parent Network & Youth MOVE Maine and devoted to behavioral health education. Funded by CBHS, it coincided with Children's Mental Health Awareness month beginning in 2011.

**2014-2019** Maine's Office of Child and Family Services continues to co-sponsor with G.E.A.R. Parent Network on an annual Children's Mental Health Awareness week celebration at the State House Hall of Flags. The Governor proclaims the first week of May as Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. The Hall of Flags event is supported by the five-member Maine Alliance of Family Organizations. Youth and family members speak on mental health stigma, trauma, suicide awareness, resiliency, mental health is a family affair, the benefits to families and youth of Maine's family organizations and peer supports; in addition that our legislation, policies, funding, and practices must fully endorse the undisputed importance of supporting child-serving providers.