



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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May is Mental Health Month: Join the U.S. Ag Safety and Health Centers' effort to promote resources for farmers and rural communities

Farmers, farm workers, and their families increasingly encounter financial hardship and uncertainty as a result of economic forces, unpredictable and extreme weather, and societal pressures. These factors have caused increases in the level of stress and anxiety, which can lead to poor mental health and even suicide. The availability, accessibility, and affordability of mental health resources and support is a particular challenge for people in agriculture, but awareness of potential resources is a critical component for addressing stress and improving resilience in these communities. This year, the 11 U.S. Agricultural Safety and Health Centers are teaming up to promote resources for farmers during a five-week Mental Health Awareness campaign that focuses on a different topic each week.

“There is no single solution in combating stress and mental health problems brought on by forces largely out of the control of farmers and farm workers, but sharing information, starting conversations, and building partnerships to improve our community response is incredibly important. We believe the more people have access to information and have conversations with their families, friends, and co-workers, and in cafes, community centers, and places of worship, the better equipped they will be to help someone in need and guide them to the right resources,” says Bruce Alexander, Professor at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and Director of the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center.

“For the past 70 years, Mental Health America’s month-long awareness campaign has primarily targeted the Americans in general, and for the first time we are joining this movement to focus on providing appropriate tools specific to more rural and agricultural communities.”

The campaign begins April 29, 2019 and runs through May 26. Topics include:

- Week 1: Science of Stress and Suicide Risk
- Week 2: Referral Resources
- Week 3. Coping with Substance Abuse/Opioids
- Week 4: Cultivating Resiliency
- Week 5: Break the Stigma

If you are active on social media be sure to display the green ribbon and use the following hashtags: #USAgCenters #MentalHealth #WhyCare #GreenRibbon, #CureStigma

For more information about the campaign and how you can be part of the conversation, visit:
umash.umn.edu/mental-health-awareness

The U.S. Agricultural Safety and Health Centers (www.cdc.gov/niosh/oe/agctrhom.html) are funded by the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety.

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