

Application for Maternal Mental Health Innovative Awards 7/17

Submitted by Nancy Roberts RN CCE CBC, Spectrum Health Grand Rapids, MI



A. Category. **Innovation in Policy and Advocacy** – National, state or local legislative or regulatory advocacy efforts with impactful results stemming from passage and/or implementation

B. Program objectives and overview of innovation: how is this innovation addressing MMH. This innovation in Policy and Advocacy event, Michigan's Lansing Capitol Steps 2017, was the first event of its kind for Perinatal Mood Disorders (PMD) Awareness in the state of Michigan. It was planned and supported by the Michigan Statewide PMD Coalition (www.mipmdcoalition.org). The Coalition was founded 3 years ago and currently has over 300 members in the state. Through its website and quarterly meetings, the Coalition supports the following Mission statement: The Michigan Statewide Perinatal Mood Disorders (PMD) Coalition exists to maintain ONE VOICE to improve the emotional health and well-being of pregnant and post-partum women and their families through education, outreach, advocacy, and support.

C. Program details, key personnel and timeline: Planning for this event started one year prior with 4 quarterly meetings and numerous email correspondences between the members of the Coalition. Key organizers and responsibilities were outlined and reports given at each planning meeting. Key leaders were Pam Moffitt from Tree of Hope Foundation, Nancy Roberts and Barb Hawkins-Palmer, including another 5 board members of the Coalition. Pam organized pre event meetings with an identified PMD Champion, Senator Biari, who gave the introduction address from the podium at the event. Nancy arranged pre event meetings that day with 2 State Representatives from the House, Representative Brinks and Representative Afendoulis. A key group of Coalition members met with both Representatives individually to provide needed PMD education and to ask for their support with future PMD related endeavors, including supporting any bill related activity. Each provided their undivided attention and pledge of support for any future legislation. They explained law passage insight and advise on the process of writing a proposed bill and steps needed to see it to completion. This provided the group with a plan of action for the next upcoming year and motivated the members to proceed forward with PMD advocacy. Pam arranged for the reservations needed to meet on the steps and finalized the requested equipment needed with her contacts at the capitol building. Barb created the event flyer, which was distributed amongst the Coalitions members. Nancy promoted the event on the local news the day before with a live

interview at the following link: <http://woodtv.com/2017/05/16/rally-wednesday-to-raise-postpartum-depression-awareness/>. A Press Release was created and sent to the Media and Coalition members for promotion and awareness. (see attachment) . And most importantly, the governors PMD Proclamation was applied for many months prior to the event and was approved and released, proclaiming the Month of May in Michigan as Postpartum Depression Awareness Month, signed by Governor Snyder (see attached) . The Postpartum Support Internationals quilt was reserved in advance and provided a beautiful background and reminder of the importance of supporting mothers who have suffered with the illness. The agenda for the event included: Welcome and comments by Senator Biari, Coalition members reading the Proclamation “Where As’s”, comments from Mothers who have experienced PMD, introduction of the PSI quilt, the past, present, and future status for PMD in our state. The event concluded with a march around the capitol building block with a large banner, the proclamation, and signs made by members and mothers who attended the event, including children in strollers. (see attached photographs)

D. Source of initial and sustained funding/support. The Healthy Kent PMD Coalition provided funds to reserve the equipment needed for the event (microphone, podium, tent, speakers, etc). They also funded the creation of the banner and misc supplies. Funds from this local PMD Coalition were obtained through hosting the PSI 2 day trainings 5 times in the Grand Rapids area over the last 8 years. This coalition has committed support for the Statewide PMD Coalition efforts in the past and in the future.

E. Length of time in operation and sustainability plans. The statewide Coalition has been in operation for 3 years, making it a fairly new organization. Plans for the future for the organization is reviewed and adopted each fall during the annual Board Meeting. Event plans are already in place to repeat the Capitol Steps Event for next May, 2018. Debriefing after the event took place with the key organizers and suggestions and recommendations from all of the members were noted. These will be taken into account during the planning stages for the next year’s event.

F. Summary of results and evidence of impact. As a result of this event, hundreds of citizens were affected and informed. The news coverage was widespread, reaching thousands of viewers in West Michigan. The event pictures were widely distributed amongst the members and their contacts. Obtaining support from our Senators and Representatives was a key objective and was accomplished with much success. Enthusiasm and motivation for PMD support was raised by those in attendance and a unified group of invested supporters were identified.

G. Discussion of scalability. It is hoped that this event becomes an Annual May Event at the Lansing Capitol with visions that it will grow each year in numbers and the PMD awareness that it raises and portrays.