



The Broadlawns Medical Center (BMC) Foundation Advocate Circle mission is to help mitigate issues surrounding mental illness in our community, including reducing wait times for services and overall mental health awareness in Central Iowa.

The BMC Foundation Advocate Circle Members have begun work on the **Mental Health Starts with Me** campaign to raise both awareness and funds for the mental health care shortage in the Central Iowa area. Currently, there is a wait time for individuals in the Central Iowa area to receive mental health services. The BMC Foundation Advocate Circle would like to significantly reduce this waiting time by raising the necessary funding to expand the mental health services that Broadlawns Medical Center is able to provide. Our website (www.BroadlawnsAdvocateCircle.org) is dedicated to that effort.

On May 15, 2014, we will bring together individuals and businesses in our community to start conversations through an event called the **ME-Series**. We want everyone to feel comfortable talking about the issues through open conversation. Ultimately, rallying together to reduce the stigma around mental illness and make sure that adequate care is available just as it is for cancer, diabetes or other physical health care issues. The **ME-Series** is also part of the State of Iowa's Healthiest State Initiative.

Our vision for the **ME-Series** is an afternoon of Pecha Kucha style presentations (10 short speakers for less than seven minutes each) by experts and interested parties around Iowa. Featured speakers will cover topics such as improved access, homelessness, workplace productivity and/or violence, suicide, reducing the stigma, quality of care, etc. Our audience will include police force, educators, health providers, individuals living with mental illness, community resource groups, employers, special interest groups, etc. – anyone impacted by mental illness. There will also be an Exhibitor Expo onsite from various community organizations for attendees to visit, gain information, and ask questions about available services for individuals living with mental illness.

More About Our Group:

The BMC Foundation Advocate Circle is a fundraising support group formed in 2011 with the goal of helping to raise community awareness and funding for the Broadlawns Medical Center Foundation to expand and enhance mental health facilities. The BMC Foundation Advocate Circle consists of a team of 26 individuals – mentors and mentees – who are here to further the development of the Broadlawns Medical Center mental health facilities and enhance awareness for the entire Central Iowa community. These individuals are being trained, mentored, and coached by seasoned community leaders, led by Johnny Danos and Connie Wimer, on how to successfully become advocates and fundraisers.

CURRENT AVAILABLE MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES ARE INSUFFICIENT FOR OUR COMMUNITY:

- Nearly 200 people in Polk County are waiting for mental health care services
- Iowa ranks 47th out of 50 in psychiatrists per capita
- While 1 in 4 adults (approximately 58 million people) experience a mental health disorder every year, Iowa currently only has approximately 6 mental health beds per 100,000 citizens
- 15% of all emergency room visits are due to individuals unable to get the mental health care they needed
- Beds are at 100% utilization, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — *the demand is critically outstripping our ability to respond*
- 24-hour observation or sub-acute care services are not available
- Public funding is extremely limited for buildings and infrastructure at both the federal and state level, including the mental health redesign legislation.

This event is being made possible by Prairie Meadows and Polk County/Polk County Mental Health. Additional sponsors are currently being solicited. Tickets will be available at www.BroadlawnsAdvocateCircle.org beginning on Monday, March 31.