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\$3 MILLION CONTRIBUTION WILL HELP THOSE AFFECTED BY OIL SPILL
BP Contribution Will Help Fund Behavioral Health Services

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Children and Families announced today that BP has agreed to provide \$3 million that will allow the agency and its community partners to maintain behavioral health and substance abuse services to individuals living and working in eight coastal counties affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

"While the beaches of Florida have been spared widespread damage from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, there has been a cloud of anxiety and fear that has affected thousands of Floridians who faced a threat to their lifestyles and professions," said Gov. Charlie Crist. "With the teamwork between DCF and many local partners, providers of mental health treatment and services have stepped up their efforts to meet the increased need to assist families, adults and children."

"The Department shared its concerns with BP over the emotional and psychological toll this ongoing event is having on individuals living and working on our coastline," said DCF Secretary George Sheldon. "This funding is a start toward helping Floridians who are beginning to feel the stress associated with this disaster. We will assess future needs and make requests for necessary funding from BP as necessary."

The contribution from BP comes after the Department had submitted a July 30 proposal to BP for \$5.6 million in advance funding to provide services designed to mitigate the adverse behavioral health effects to nearly 46,000 Floridians as a result of economic, community and cultural losses resulting from the oil spill.

The BP contribution will not prevent the Department from seeking additional funding as needed for critical mental health services in the aftermath of the oil spill.

Nationally, BP is also offering similar contributions to other affected Gulf Coast states and providing \$13 million to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration to set up a toll-free number for those seeking assistance. The contribution also will fund public education and outreach programs similar to those suggested by the Department.

Part of that \$5.6 million request was to recoup costs of Camp Beyond the Horizon, sponsored by the Department and Lutheran Services of Florida. The therapeutic camps are designed for children experiencing anxiety and uncertainty in the aftermath of the oil spill.

The contribution will allow the Department and its many behavioral health partners to maintain an array of individual and group interventions, outreach and public education in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla counties.

Behavioral health services providers include Lakeview Center in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, which will coordinate with Bridgeway Center in Okaloosa and Cope Center in Walton; Life Management Center in Bay and Gulf counties; and Apalachee Center in Franklin and Wakulla.

Apalachee Center Inc., which offers services in the Big Bend region, already has seen the impact of the oil spill in Franklin and Wakulla Counties. Jay Reeve, the center's CEO, said demand for crisis stabilization services by residents of Franklin County between April and June 2010 had doubled from the same time period last year. Wakulla County saw a 30 percent increase in demand for these services during this same period. In addition, Reeve said, requests for walk-in appointments for counseling have also increased sharply, particularly in Franklin County.

Reeve said that in response to these increased demands, Apalachee Center has doubled the availability of psychiatric services in its Franklin County clinic, and added 30 hours a week of master's-level counseling service availability. These services are available regardless of insurance, on a sliding fee scale basis.

"These services, however, constitute an emergency stop-gap measure that cannot be sustained without additional funding," Reeve said. "The funding will allow Apalachee to field comprehensive behavioral health programs in Franklin and Wakulla counties."

Gary Bemby, senior vice president at Baptist Health Care, said he is pleased to see BP acknowledge the potential long-term psychological impact of the Deepwater Horizon spill. Lakeview Center, a provider of mental health services in the Pensacola area, is an affiliate of Baptist Health Care.

"This funding will be instrumental in providing ongoing outreach, public education, and other services needed to minimize the impact on our community of the stress created by the economic and environmental effects of the spill," Bemby said.

"We recognize that there is a great deal of stress and anxiety across the region," said Lamar McKay, president of BP America and incoming leader of the Gulf Coast Restoration Organization. "As part of our determination to make things right for the people of this region, we are providing this assistance now to help make sure people who need help know where to turn."

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