



Why We're Making Sure Ohioans Know that *Recovery Is Beautiful!*

By: Cheri L. Walter, CEO, Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities



Recovery Is Beautiful is about hope and the promise of the fact that life can be better once recovery is achieved. It does not negate the fact that recovery is hard and at times very difficult and it focuses on the fact that recovery should be celebrated!

With the *Recovery Is Beautiful* movement, we are working to change the conversation about mental illness and addiction. We're talking with individuals, families, professionals, and community members to make sure they understand that mental illness and addiction are diseases, that they are treatable, and that people recover.

Ohio's system of addiction and mental health services and programs was built with one premise in mind; helping Ohioans live better, healthier, and drug-free lives. This is what *Recovery Is Beautiful* is all about. Getting back to the core of why these systems exist, to help individual Ohioans and their families. *Recovery Is Beautiful* is also about helping Ohio's communities become and stay healthy and safe, with the recognition that people often require help, and when they do we need to be ready and able to serve them for the length of time their chronic disease requires. We are doing this by helping Ohio's local community mental health and addictions systems transition into Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care.

Mental illness and addiction are chronic diseases and cannot be addressed with just acute care services. We know that treatment works and people recover. However, we must remember that recovery is a life-long process, and it is not always linear. Recovery is different for each individual and his/her family. It comes in many dimensions and is a very personal journey. *Recovery Is Beautiful* is about supporting individuals and their families in the process of recovery, helping communities become and stay healthy with programs and services from prevention and wellness to crisis services to treatment and long-term recovery supports. Most of all, *Recovery Is Beautiful* is about hope, the hope that anyone can recover and by working together we can make recovery not only possible, but desirable!

Recovery Is Beautiful has been going strong for the last 10 months. Since we began this movement, I've had the opportunity with talk to hundreds of individuals in recovery from both a mental illness and/or addiction and their family members, and they have shared with me how recovery has allowed them or their loved ones to live life – not just experience it from the outside. They then shared with me



how excited they are that local Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards are putting individuals in recovery and their family members first. We are making sure we hear from individuals and families about what is working and what isn't, and most importantly, allowing them to be a critical part of the decision-making process. Through *Recovery Is Beautiful*, communities are being mobilized to think differently about how they meet local needs related to mental health and addiction services and recovery supports.

We hope that you will join us and help make Recovery Beautiful in your community and throughout Ohio. Join us as we spread the word about the beauty of recovery by going to www.RecoveryIsBeautiful.org and following us on Twitter @RIB_org.