



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11, 2019

Contact:

Sara Medley, CEO

Mountain-Pacific Quality Health

406.457.5820

smedley@mpqhf.org

Students to be Awarded Monday for Involvement in Youth Suicide Prevention Campaign

(Helena, Mont.) – Mountain-Pacific Quality Health is pleased to present checks to the student winners of the What Gives You Hope Instagram contest on Monday, January 14, at 11:30 AM at Capital High School. Six Capital and Helena High School students and each school’s Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) club will receive the awards.

In 2017 Mountain-Pacific launched a project that aims to increase the awareness of mental illness and reduce teen suicide in the greater Helena area. Mountain-Pacific received a \$50,000 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana for the project. The project established a youth task force that developed messaging and strategies geared to increasing awareness of problems common to this age group, such as the stigma of mental health, stress, relationship issues and bullying.

The What Gives You Hope Instagram contest is an awareness campaign that features 193 student-submitted photos of hope. Mountain-Pacific launched the contest to help promote a suicide prevention app called the #LetsTalkApp. Youth can download and use the app to find information about suicide and locations around Helena where they can get help or just talk to someone, called safe spaces.

“I couldn’t be happier with the participation in the What Gives You Hope Instagram contest,” says Mountain-Pacific’s Janet Whitmoyer. “Capital High and Helena High students submitted some amazing photos. Both HOSA clubs were so excited to take part in this friendly competition, while getting the opportunity to share what brings them hope and spread that hope to others. They are passionate about suicide prevention and helping their peers, and it was awesome to be a part of that.”

(more)

Montana ranks among the highest in the nation for suicide. In fact, Montana's suicide rate has been at or near the top for nearly four decades. Suicide and attempted suicide seems especially prevalent among high school students. There were 27 youth suicides from January 1, 2014 to March 16, 2017—seven of which occurred in the greater Helena area.

“Mountain-Pacific is honored to be involved in this important initiative to raise awareness and to help prevent youth suicide,” says Sara Medley, Mountain-Pacific CEO. “Suicide has become a major health problem in our country and right here in our state, and unfortunately, youth suicide has hit very close to home. My hope is that this project will provide youth in our community with much needed resources to help them realize there is always someone to talk to, somewhere to go and a reason to keep looking ahead.”

The Capital High HOSA club submitted the most photos and will receive a \$1,000 award. The Helena High School HOSA club placed second and will receive a \$500 award. Individual award winners are listed below.

Helena High School winners:

- Dani Stinson - \$200
- Sage Eck-Miller - \$25
- Alex Lavign - \$25

Capital High School winners:

- Zoe Brown - \$200
- Amber Edinger - \$25
- Elizabeth Walker - \$25

Mountain-Pacific appreciates Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana for their funding and support on this important initiative.

About Mountain-Pacific—Mountain-Pacific is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and holds federal and state contracts that allow them to oversee the quality of care for Medicare and Medicaid members. Mountain-Pacific works within its region (Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Territories of Guam and American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) to help improve the delivery of health care and the systems that provide it. Mountain-Pacific's goal is to increase access to high-quality health care that is affordable, safe and of value to the patients they serve. www.mpqhf.org

###