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National Recovery Month Planning Partners Honors Pennsylvania's Gary Tennis with Ramstad/Kennedy Award for Outstanding Leadership

The Single State Authority for the state of Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs is honored for outstanding leadership in supporting addiction recovery and Recovery Month in promoting systemic change within the state

Washington, DC (June 2, 2015) – Today the Eighth Annual Ramstad/Kennedy Award for outstanding leadership recognized the extraordinary impact of Gary Tennis, the Single State Authority for the State of Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol for his leadership in recovery support across his state and nationally. The award was presented in Charleston, South Carolina during the 2015 Annual Meeting Awards Luncheon of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD). The Award was established in honor of Congressmen Jim Ramstad and Patrick Kennedy. The two Congressmen have become vocal advocates of recovery treatment in all forms, and championed localized efforts to support prevention, treatment and recovery.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recognizes that long-term recovery is not only possible, but is the goal of addiction and mental illness treatment and support programs. The 2015 honoree has worked to spread this positive message and the message that prevention can be effective in helping to break the cycle of addiction in families.

“Gary Tennis is recognized for his leadership in the establishment of *Building Bridges to Recovery*, reaching out to physicians to educate them about recovery. In this time of unprecedented opioid addiction and overdose, Secretary Tennis has given value to those individuals in the throes of their disease and offered hope that these lives are worth saving and that appropriate treatment must be available as well as supports to maintain recovery. Through his coordination of efforts of FASD awareness with Recovery Month, he has provided encouragement to mothers in recovery and seeking recovery. In addition by supporting statewide Recovery Month initiatives and activities, involving local communities, and obtaining an annual Recovery Month proclamation from the governor, he has elevated the recovery conversation to a year-round recognition.” said Sis Wenger, National Association of Children of Alcoholics (NACoA), a Recovery Month partner.

“Together in partnership with the dedicated organizations who comprise the Recovery Month Planning Partners, recovery success stories have become commonplace throughout Pennsylvania, partly because of Secretary Tennis’ compassionate commitment to individuals and families impacted by addiction,” Wenger continued.

“The recipient of the Ramstad/Kennedy award embodies the innovation of a leader dedicated to support prevention, treatment and recovery in their community. On behalf of over 200 collaborating organizations in the Recovery Month Planning Partners, we congratulate Secretary Tennis,” said Recovery Month partner Marie Gallo Dyak, Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.

Both Retired Minnesota 3rd district representative Jim Ramstad and Retired Rhode Island 1st district representative Patrick J. Kennedy also championed a mental health parity law in 2008 requiring easily assessable health insurance coverage for mental illness and addiction treatment. Together the Congressmen have sponsored Recovery Month and other programs to further prevention, treatment and recovery services across the country. The award in their names honors a recipient who has shown upmost commitment in expanding the prospects for recovery of addicted persons and their families and for persons with mental illnesses.

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