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National Recovery Month Planning Partners Honor, Danielle Kirby, Director, Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery

With the *Ramstad/Kennedy Award for Outstanding Leadership*

The Single State Authority for the State of Illinois honored for outstanding leadership in supporting addiction recovery and Recovery Month and in promoting systemic change within the state to promote sustained recovery for individuals and impacted family members.

Washington, DC (September 15, 2020) – The twelfth Annual ***Ramstad/Kennedy Award*** for outstanding leadership recognizes Danielle Kirby who is being honored for her leadership in recovery support programs across her state and nationally. The award was established in honor of Congressman Jim Ramstad and Patrick J. Kennedy. The two Congressmen have been vocal advocates of recovery support services in all forms, and championed localized efforts to support prevention, treatment and recovery.

“Now, more than ever, recovery leaders are essential to our ability to address historic rates of overdoses and suicides, said Patrick J. Kennedy, founder of The Kennedy Forum. People like Danielle Kirby are not only serving the communities in which they work, they are also serving their country. We are extremely grateful for her hard work and dedication.”

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recognizes that long-term recovery is not only possible, but is the goal of addiction treatment and recovery support programs. The 2020 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.

Danielle Kirby established an ambitious agenda to promote recovery and change the narrative of “addiction” in Illinois and to eliminate the stigma that so frequently accompanies the treatment and recovery journey for individuals with substance use disorders and their children and families. She has vigorously promoted recovery concepts and applied them to public policy and funding opportunities. She addressed stigma through innovative public awareness campaigns as well as including persons with lived experience at decision making tables, showing others in strategic roles the importance of making recovery visible. She has been a strong supporter of National Recovery Month and has worked to bring understanding of the value of evidence-based FDA approved medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and recovery and advocated for its acceptance in Illinois. “Danielle Kirby has been in this position for less than two years, and yet has shown an energetic and inclusive spirit in supporting and promoting recovery community organizations and recovery resources for the present and future benefit of Illinois families and communities,” said Sis Wenger, President and CEO of the National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA), a Recovery Month Planning Partner.”

“Together, in partnership with the dedicated organizations who comprise the Recovery Month Planning Partners, recovery success stories are becoming commonplace in Illinois, in part because of Danielle’s on-going and exceptional leadership and commitment,” 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 Danielle on her vision and commitment” said Recovery Month partner Marie Gallo Dyak, President of the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.

Both Retired Minnesota 3rd district representative Jim Ramstad and Retired Rhode Island 1st district representative Patrick J. Kennedy also championed the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act in 2008, which requires insurers to cover treatment for mental health and substance use disorders no more restrictively than treatment for illnesses of the body, such as diabetes and cancer. Together the Congressmen have sponsored Recovery Month and other programs to further therapy, treatment and recovery services for these illnesses across the country. The award in their names honors a recipient who has shown utmost commitment in expanding the prospects for recovery of addicted persons and their families.

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