



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SHEL GROSS SELECTED FOR 2018 PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD BY STATE SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION

The National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter (NASW WI) has selected Shel Gross, the Director of Public Policy for Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA), for their 2018 Public Service Award.

Shel Gross was selected for NASW WI's 2018 Public Service award for his career work as a mental health advocate.

Shel has been Director of Public Policy for Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA) since 2000. Shel is a former member and Chair of the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health (the state planning and advisory council) and current member (and former Chair) of its Legislative and Policy Committee. Prior to joining MHA Shel worked for ten years in the Wisconsin Medicaid program.

Shel has served as co-chair, Prevent Suicide Wisconsin since 2009, is a past board member of the Wisconsin Prevention Network, past co-chair of Wisconsin United for Mental Health, a statewide anti-stigma initiative, and past co-chair of the Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations. Shel is Project Manager for two grants from the WI Dept. of Health Services which focus on suicide prevention and formerly managed Wisconsin's federal Garrett Lee Smith youth suicide prevention grant. He was also the Project Manager for "Building the Mentally Healthy Workplace", a grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

For over ten years Shel served as Co-Chair of a Wisconsin advocacy coalition promoting the passage of a mental health parity bill. This bill passed in 2009.

Shel has received a number of awards in his career including: the Karen Avery Award, Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force, 2017; Lifetime Contribution to Advocacy, NAMI-WI, 2016; Government Services Award, National Alliance for the Mentally-ill-Wisconsin, 1999; and Certificate of Recognition, Department of Public Instruction, 2007.

Shel's recent publications include: 1) Co-Author, Burden of Suicide in Wisconsin Report, 2007 and 2) Co-Author, Wisconsin Suicide Prevention Strategy, 2015

Shel holds a Masters' Degree in Public Policy from the LaFollette Institute for Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has 45 years of experience in the mental health field.



NASW WI will present its 2018 Public Service Award to Shel Gross at its annual conference awards ceremony luncheon on Friday October 19<sup>th</sup> at the Crowne Plaza Milwaukee airport.

For more information regarding NASW WI's 2018 conference, please contact the NASW WI office at (608) 257-6334.

The Wisconsin Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers is the largest organization of professional social workers in Wisconsin. It represents over 1400 social workers. NASW WI members are employed in a variety of settings, including public and private human service agencies, schools and colleges, mental health facilities, hospitals, nursing homes, industry and private practice.