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Arizona Teen Program Named Finalist for Innovations Award *MY LIFE Gives Youth a Voice in Making Positive Life Changes*

An Arizona program that empowers youth facing behavioral health challenges has been selected as a finalist in a regional competition that recognizes innovation in state government. Arizona's Department of Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health Services is one of six 2009 Western regional finalists for the Council of State Governments (CSG) Annual Innovations Awards for its submission of the MY LIFE program - Magellan Youth Leaders Inspiring Future Empowerment.

MY LIFE is a youth leadership program devoted to empowering youth to make a positive impact on Arizona's behavioral health system, as well as in their larger community. In both 2008 and 2009, MY LIFE launched My Fest, an annual community event filled with music, art, and entertainment aimed at reducing stigma for youth with mental health and/or substance use disorders.

"The Department of Health Services has a vision when it comes to meaningful and visible youth involvement. That vision calls for youth taking action and assuming leadership roles," said Dr. Laura Nelson, Acting Deputy Director for the Arizona Department of Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health Services. "Arizona realizes the challenges that all youth face as they transition to adulthood, but these challenges are greatly magnified for youth who struggle with mental illness or substance use disorders. Helping these youth become empowered and realize they can be successful is a vital element of this transition period. We feel so proud to have the MY LIFE program in Arizona."

A panel of western state legislators will review the regional finalists for the 2009 CSG Innovations Award and determine two winners at the upcoming CSG-*WEST* 2009 annual meeting in October. The two winners will represent the Western region at the CSG annual conference in November. For more information on the MY LIFE program, visit www.MagellanofAZ.com/MYLIFE or call Magellan of Arizona at (800) 564-5465, TTY (800) 424-9831.

About the Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services

The Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS) serves as the single state authority to provide coordination, planning, administration, regulation and monitoring of all facets of the state public behavioral health system. For more information about the Division, visit www.azdhs.gov/bhs or call (602) 364-4558.

About Magellan Health Services of Arizona

As the Regional Behavioral Health Authority for Maricopa County, Magellan Health Services of Arizona serves as a critical point of connection to the more than 80,000 individuals who have experienced life challenges as a result of mental illness and substance abuse. Magellan gives these individuals voice and choice to realize their desired outcomes, and supports them with caring, unrivaled customer service that is sensitive to the diversity of our communities. For more information, visit www.MagellanofAZ.com.

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