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New Leash on Life to Raise Awareness of Mental Health

Rochester, Minn. – Zumbro Valley Health Center, a not-for-profit organization that provides mental, chemical, medical, dental and social services to under- and un-insured people across Southeast Minnesota, invites the community to participate in the 7th Annual *New Leash on Life* fundraiser. The event will be held at Rochester’s Silver Lake Park on Saturday, September 24, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Individuals and teams can register at <http://www.firstgiving.com/newleashonlife-rochesterminn/2016-new-leash-on-life-5k-dog-run3k-fun-walk>.

Participants can participate in a 5K run or 3K fun walk through the park. At the finish line, participants will celebrate with games, prizes and refreshments. Other features include:

- T-shirts for all participants
- Games and activities for dogs
- Awards for top pledge collectors
- K-9 demonstration
- Sponsor booths with give-aways
- Trophies for top 5K finishers

“The *New Leash on Life* event is focused on raising awareness of mental illness and the helpful role that pets play,” said Dave Cook, chief executive officer for Zumbro Valley Health Center. “By partnering with Paws & Claws Humane Society on this event, we’re able to show people firsthand how pet ownership can positively impact their lives.”

Research shows that having a dog, cat or other pet has a positive impact on fighting depression and coping with stress by reducing loneliness. Pet owners also benefit from exercising more, resulting in fewer headaches, lower blood pressure and a reduced risk for heart disease.

Cook said Zumbro Valley Health Center clinicians emphasize regular exercise as part of any treatment plan, and that pets are great for this.

About Zumbro Valley Health Center

Restoring hope...one life at a time. Zumbro Valley Health Center enhances the quality of life for residents in southeastern Minnesota by serving as a community resource for the integrated treatment of mental health issues, addiction disorders and medical conditions. The organization collaborates with government agencies, schools, non-profit groups and others to provide integrated services to under- and un-served populations. Zumbro Valley Health Center is a private, non-profit organization serving Olmsted and Fillmore counties. For more information, visit our Web site at www.zvhc.org or call 507-289-2089.

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