



**Susan Tave Zeiman**

Superintendent of Public Instruction

November 1, 2003

**TO:** City, Local and Exempted Village Superintendents/Principals

**FROM:** Susan Tave Zeiman  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Michael F. Hogan, Director  
Ohio Department of Mental Health

**SUBJECT:** Red Flags: Depression Awareness Program for Middle Schools

Beginning in 1999, the Red Flags Program was disseminated statewide. We appreciate the efforts of all schools that have requested and utilized these materials. To date, Red Flags curriculum materials have been distributed to approximately 730 schools throughout Ohio that have grades 6, 7 or 8. Feedback has been very positive. Additionally, there is growing national support for programs like Red Flags. The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (chaired by Dr. Hogan) promotes school-based early detection, assessment and links to treatment. This will help prevent mental health problems from worsening, and contribute to school success. We hope you will continue to use these materials or strive to initiate the program this school year.

Comments from schools who have requested the Program indicate a great need for technical support to assist with program implementation, identifying mental health resources, obtaining administrative support, securing speakers for the personnel and parent components of the program, and help in building collaborations to meet student/family needs. To respond to these needs, the Mental Health Association of Summit County and the Ohio Department of Mental Health have formed a unique partnership with local and state organizations to provide your school additional technical support to assist with the implementation process.

Working together, we can reduce adolescent depression and suicide. The right collaborations can address these needs—a crucial step for academic success for many children. With enough local interest, Red Flags staff may be able to facilitate training on Red Flags specifically for your county or region. For additional information or to request technical assistance to initiate Red Flags in your school, please contact Victoria Doepker, Program Coordinator, Mental Health Association of Summit County at (800) 991-1311.

STZ/MFH/vs  
cc: ADAMH Boards/CMH Boards