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Contact: Office of Planning & Resource Development
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12th Annual “ADMH Harley Ride” to Make Christmas Special for Youth at ADMH’s Psychiatric Adolescent Unit at UAB

MONTGOMERY – For the twelfth year in a row, members of the Heart of Dixie Harley Owners Group-Pelham Chapter are gearing up to make Christmas a little brighter for teens and children committed to the Alabama Department of Mental Health’s Psychiatric Adolescent Unit at UAB. The unit serves adolescents committed to the ADMH statewide and has the capacity to serve 10 adolescents. On Saturday, December 12th, a large caravan of Harley-Davidson motorcyclists will leave the Pelham dealership at 11:15 a.m. They will arrive at the ADMH unit at UAB around 11:45 am to visit and distribute gifts they have collected and wrapped.

The Heart of Dixie Harley Owners Group has again chosen the “ADMH Harley Ride” as one of their primary charity rides of the year. Tena Whitworth, Fundraiser for the Heart of Dixie Chapter, shared the following, “People always ask why we do this ride, this year I have to say because this is what Christmas is about! If you could see the look on these kids’ faces when you give them something so simple as a tie blanket; have them look at you and ask is this mine? Just for me to keep? Then you have your answer! Christmas is about giving and love. We let these kids know that someone cares and loves them.” The ride is a partnership between the Alabama Department of Mental Health’s Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, JBS Mental Health in Birmingham, the Heart of Dixie Harley Owners Group and UAB.

The annual ride combines the excitement of gifts and fellowship with the thrill of a motorcycle ride. James Perdue, Commissioner for the ADMH, conveyed, “One of the most iconic images of Americana is a motorcycle ride on a Harley. Whether someone has taken a cruise on a big bike or not, which I have not, the feeling of the joy of a bike ride is experienced by both the participant and the observer. This same iconic image of giving is an integral part of American life. However, that joy is only experienced by the participant and not the observer. Please join me in this experience and give.” The generosity of those who give both tangible gifts and the gift of their time, along with the joy and excitement it brings to the children, truly exemplifies the spirit of the season. Dr. Bell-Shambley, Associate Commissioner, expressed, “I look forward to this time of year, when the paths of the children served on the Adolescent Unit cross with those of the Heart of Dixie Harley Riders! It is phenomenal to experience the generosity and kindness of these men and women toward children they do not know personally, yet they unselfishly give of their time and resources to brighten their day and assure that they have an abundance of gifts for Christmas. The children are always excited and express their gratitude as they socialize with the Harley Riders. We are so thankful that year after year they have repeatedly demonstrated ‘compassion in action’.”

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Press Information:

- Contact for the day of the ride will be: Gayla Caddell, 334-324-1557
- Location is 1713 6th Avenue South, Birmingham 35294
- Press will be allowed to accompany the riders and staff to the administrative office only
- Check in at the info desk in the lobby and say you are there for the Harley Ride presentation
- Cameras may be used in front of the hospital as the riders approach the facility
- Bikers and gifts may be photographed