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**EXCELA HEALTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH THERAPISTS
PROMOTE FAMILY SUPPORT**

GREENSBURG, PA, February 14, 2013 ... When children need therapeutic support through counseling, medication or hospitalization to bring emotions or behaviors under control, parents often question their nurturing skills and wonder what they've done wrong. Marcie Stover-Jividen, MSW, LSW, a therapist with Excela Health's child and adolescent behavioral health program, has introduced a new support group for families and loved ones of young people with behavioral, mood or developmental issues. The group meets the first Tuesday of each month from 5 to 6 p.m. in the Behavioral Health Outpatient Clinic at Excela Health Latrobe Hospital. The first gathering is March 5.

"Many parents feel alone or uncomfortable sharing with family and friends, believing they will be judged negatively because their child needs help," said Stover-Jividen. "Through the family support group parents see they can actually have a deeper relationship with their children, rather than feel distanced from them."

Stover-Jividen is also facilitating a group for adolescents. The teen-agers find peer support and a transitional environment in which to seek assistance. "We work on mindfulness and relaxation techniques or therapeutic art. Some of the teens write poetry or song lyrics. Youth can be very artistic and open-minded in expressing their feelings. The support group is very helpful in avoiding hospitalization."

The makeup of the groups is fluid, explained Stover-Jividen. "Some people move on because they are feeling better. Friendships may develop and

continue outside the group.”

Crisis situations such as the school shootings in Connecticut or the hostage-taking in Alabama may spur mixed emotions for parents and their offspring. Stover-Jividen urges age-appropriate responses. As the parent of young children herself, she keeps the television off and the conversation light. “My 7-year-old son is a worrier so I want to be reassuring and prepare him in advance should he hear conversations in his school. I simply said a person came into a school and hurt some children, but that isn’t going to happen here. Then he told me he saw a guy outside his school with a gun. I asked if the man was wearing hunter’s clothing and reminded him he should always feel comfortable telling a teacher or another adult he trusts when something bothers him.”

For more information about Excelsa Health’s behavioral health services, visit www.excelahealth.org or contact Excelsa Health’s Call Center, toll free, 1-877-771-1234. To participate in the support groups, dial 724-537-1650.