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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SWFAS ADDS SATURDAY HOURS IN CAPE CORAL
FOR YOUTH OUTPATIENT SERVICES**

Southwest Florida Addiction Services (SWFAS) has expanded its treatment hours in Cape Coral for families that have difficulty accessing substance abuse treatment services for youngsters during the work week.

Beginning May 3, SWFAS will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays for walk-in cases at the Cape Coral office at 1105 Cultural Park Blvd. No appointment is necessary, according to SWFAS Youth Outpatient Services Director Nancy Regenold.

“We were hearing from a lot of parents that it was difficult for them to get time off from work to take their children for substance abuse treatment,” Regenold said. “Anything we can do to make treatment more available and more successful is in everyone’s best interests.”

The SWFAS Cape Coral office treats about 100 youngsters a month from ages 12 to 17. About 70 percent of those adolescents are from Cape Coral.

Youth outpatient treatment also is offered at the Juvenile Assessment Center in downtown Fort Myers and at the Lehigh Acres United Way House, although there are no plans to offer Saturday hours at those locations, Regenold said..

“Anyone from anywhere in Lee County is welcome to bring their child to the Cape Coral facility on Saturdays, even if they never have received treatment for substance abuse previously,” she said.

Several warning signs may indicate that a child has a problem with drugs or alcohol, including:

- Unexplained absences from school;
- Changes in behavior, such as unwillingness to discuss friends and school activities;

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- Disinterest in hobbies and activities that they once enjoyed;
- Making new friends and disassociating from older friends;
- Showing more anger or otherwise acting out; getting into frequent arguments with parents; and
- Involvement in the juvenile justice system.

“Our goal is to help youth and families learn healthier ways to deal with problem behaviors such as substance abuse and anger,” Regenold said.

Parents who are interested in SWFAS services must first have their youngsters undergo an initial screening and assessment, which are offered on Saturdays as well as during the week.

Depending upon their needs, youth may be referred to one of three group therapy sessions that meet in the evenings for six weeks.

Treatment does work. SWFAS follow-up data on 162 teens who successfully completed treatment in a similar program with parent involvement shows that 82 percent were not using drugs or alcohol one year later. Similar data on teens who completed treatment without parent involvement had only a 29 percent success rate one year later.

SWFAS is the most comprehensive substance abuse treatment and prevention program in Southwest Florida, serving 6,000 people per year from ages 9 to 90. SWFAS offers outpatient and residential programs for both adults and youngsters from seven locations in Lee County and two in Hendry County. In addition, SWFAS provides detoxification services for adults, prevention programming, and an Employee Assistance Program for about 80 Southwest Florida businesses.

Fees are charged on a sliding scale, based on family income. In many cases, private insurance is accepted. SWFAS is a United Way agency.

For more information, contact Nancy Regenold at (239) 772-1211 or visit www.swfas.org.