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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Guardian Behavioral Health Foundation** kicks off the **Mental Health Symposium**; the first of its kind with over 150 guests held on **Friday, November 6, 2015** at **The Marriott Boca Raton**. Their mission is to raise awareness through education to break the stigma associated with people who suffer from mental health disorders and to give back to those in critical need of treatment.*

Nestled in Fort Lauderdale, Florida [Guardian Behavioral Health Foundation](#) is a 501c3 organization dedicated to bridging the gap between individuals living with mental illness and the services and medications they need and deserve. One in four American adults live with a seriously disabling mental illness such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder and Major Depression— all of which are manageable with the right medication and counseling, but debilitating if left untreated.

Direct costs of mental illness have been estimated at almost \$150 billion dollars a year and they are rising. Half of all mental health dollars in the state of Florida are spent on institutional care. CEO of Destination Hope, [Benjamin Brafman](#), adds, “Treating individuals in the community by providing them with the financial and clinical support needed for them to thrive long term is far more cost-effective and humane than short term incarceration.” From community awareness and professional training to service linkage and financial assistance, Guardian Behavioral Health Foundation provides care where it is most cost-effective and most needed: the community.

The **Mental Health Symposium** will serve as the platform for South Florida community leaders, City Officials, and professionals within this industry to come together to help tackle some of the key issues providers and patients struggle with on a recurring basis. The symposium is uniquely designed to create awareness and reduce the stigma of those suffering from mental health disorders. The format includes a luncheon panel discussion on the decriminalization of mental illness, which is comprised of an interdisciplinary team including law enforcement and legal professionals, clinicians and licensed providers, treatment professionals, and educators moderated by Benjamin Brafman.

The symposium will also include a silent auction, networking break and exhibit hall. The hours are from 10:00AM until 1:00PM located at The Marriott Boca Raton at 5150 Town Center Circle, Boca Raton, FL 33486. For more information, please call Catherine Lovern at (954) 615-1726 or email at Katie@guardianbehavioral.org.

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