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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GATEWAY HEALTHCARE CELEBRATES ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Honoring Congressman Kennedy with Keynote by
Former Senator Max Cleland

WARWICK, RI – May 20, 2009 – Gateway Healthcare celebrated its Annual Luncheon at The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick, Rhode Island on Monday, May 18th. With over 225 friends, supporters and employees in attendance, Gateway celebrated its accomplishments and future endeavors, including the new initiatives that will address the need for increased access to mental health services for the 80,000 veterans, active duty members and their families living in Rhode Island.

Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy (D-RI) announced a \$190,000 appropriation for Gateway for the development of programming with the Rhode Island National Guard Family Readiness Group. Kennedy, a longtime supporter of Gateway Healthcare and this year's recipient of the Gateway Champion Award for his leadership and advocacy in behavioral healthcare, joined **Former Senator Max Cleland (D-GA)** in providing their perspective on the needs of veterans and their families in the United States.

"As many as one in five of all combat casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan may be suffering from PTSD, traumatic brain injuries or debilitating depression. Gateway is to be commended for their outreach and help to Rhode Island veterans suffering from the invisible wounds of war," said Senator Max Cleland.

Max Cleland is an American war hero and has been a distinguished public servant for over forty years. Awarded both the Bronze and Silver Stars for during the Vietnam War, Senator Cleland has been an advocate of veterans, becoming the first Vietnam Veteran elected to the Georgia Senate. Working for the elderly and handicapped, Senator Cleland was instrumental in ensuring that public facilities in Georgia were accessible to the elderly and handicapped. From there, he joined the U.S. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and investigated hospitals in the VA health care system and their treatment of the wounded returning from Vietnam. As the youngest administrator ever of the Veterans Administration, Cleland created the Vet Center counseling program for veterans dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder and associated problems,

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growing it to over 200 Vet Centers across America. Senator Cleland has been a forceful advocate for veterans and for a strong national defense, working to improve the Department of Defense and advocating for the creation of a cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security and the Aviation Security Law, both of which have improved the federal government's response to terrorist attacks. Senator Cleland has earned many awards over his distinguished career including the Thomas Jefferson Award, the Neal Pike Prize from Boston University and the Reserve Officers Association's Minute Man of the Year Award.

"We were honored to have two distinguished representatives from the US legislature joining us at our Annual Luncheon. As men and women return home from war, trying to rebuild their lives, it is imperative that the behavioral health needs of these veterans and their families are addressed," said Richard Leclerc, President of Gateway Healthcare. "Understanding their needs and the challenges they face as they reintegrate into family life and the community is paramount."

In anticipation of the federal appropriation funding, Gateway has embarked on a unique collaboration with the Rhode Island National Guard to create a system of care for veterans and their families that is both preventative and proactive in addressing issues while increasing access to behavioral health services in Rhode Island. Programming will provide social, educational and family opportunities and support to National Guard reservists, active duty members and their families throughout the deployment cycle.

Gateway's Annual Luncheon event was open to the public.



[PHOTO CAPTION: (l-r) Commander James Robbins, RI D.A.V; Mike Minutelli, P.T. Boat Combat Veteran; Former Senator Max Cleland (D-RI); and William P. Donnelly, Past RI State Commander of the VFW]

About Gateway Healthcare, Inc.:

Gateway Healthcare, Inc., a non-profit behavioral healthcare organization, provides a broad spectrum of preventative and treatment programs for children, adolescents, families, and adults throughout Rhode Island suffering from severe mental illness, substance abuse problems, and emotional and behavioral disorders. Gateway Healthcare, Inc. is headquartered in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Gateway serves over 14,000 children, adults and families each year.

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