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APA Responds to Tom Cruise's Today Show Interview

Arlington, Va. - The American Psychiatric Association (APA) released the following statement in response to Tom Cruise's anti-psychiatry remarks. While the APA respects the right of individuals to express their own points of view, science has proven that mental illnesses are real medical conditions that affect millions of Americans.

"It is irresponsible for Mr. Cruise to use his movie publicity tour to promote his own ideological views and deter people with mental illness from getting the care they need," said APA President Dr. Steven S. Sharfstein.

Over the past five years, the nation has more than doubled its investment in the study of the human brain and behavior, leading to a vastly expanded understanding of postpartum depression, bipolar disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Much of this research has been conducted by the National Institutes of Health and the nation's leading academic institutions.

Safe and effective treatments are available and may include talk therapy, medication or a combination of the two. Rigorous, published, peer-reviewed research clearly demonstrates that treatment works.

Medications can be an important and even life-saving part of a comprehensive and individualized treatment plan. As in other areas of medicine, medications are a safe and effective way to improve the quality of life for millions of Americans who have mental health concerns.

Mental health is a critical ingredient of overall health. It is unfortunate that in the face of this remarkable scientific and clinical progress that a small number of individuals and groups persist in questioning its legitimacy.

The diagnosis of a mental illness no longer carries the fear or shame it once did, according to a recent APA consumer survey. Nearly 90 percent of Americans surveyed correctly believe that people with mental illness can live healthy lives and an overwhelming majority (80 percent) feels confident that mental health treatment works. Study findings also show that nearly 70 percent of people surveyed view going to a psychiatrist as a sign of strength.

"We know that treatment works," said APA Medical Director James H. Scully Jr., M.D. "And since safe, effective treatments are available, Americans can have what everyone wants – healthy minds and healthy lives."

About the American Psychiatric Association:

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose nearly 36,000 physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Healthy Minds. Healthy Lives. Care that works to get your mind healthy again so you can lead a healthy life. Visit APA at www.psych.org and www.healthyminds.org.