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APA Statement on Psychiatric Practices at Guantanamo Bay

Arlington, Va. – The American Psychiatric Association (APA) is troubled by recent reports regarding alleged violations of professional medical ethics by psychiatrists at Guantanamo Bay. APA is reviewing issues related to psychiatry and interrogation procedures and plans to develop a specific policy statement in the near future.

APA is not neutral on physician practices and clearly recommends that psychiatric physicians practice in accordance with the APA ethics guidelines, which are also in accordance with the medical code of ethics set forth in the *Principles of Medical Ethics* of the American Medical Association (AMA).

APA's *Principles of Medical Ethics with Annotations Especially Applicable to Psychiatry* states the following:

- A physician shall be dedicated to providing competent medical care with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights.
- A physician shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek change in those requirements which are contrary to the best interests of the patients.
- Ethical considerations in medical practice preclude the psychiatric evaluation of any person charged with criminal acts prior to access to, or availability of, legal counsel. The only exception is the rendering of care to the person for the sole purpose of medical treatment.
- A physician shall respect the rights of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals, and shall safeguard patient confidences and privacy within the constraints of the law.

To view *The Principles of Medical Ethics with Annotations Especially Applicable to Psychiatry*, visit: http://www.psych.org/psych_pract/ethics/ethics.cfm

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.