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Crisis on Campus***American Psychiatric Association (APA) Launches College Mental Health Initiative***

Arlington, Va. – Across the country, students are preparing to start or return to college. This is an exciting time, though for some it's overwhelming and stressful. Depression, substance use and eating disorders are increasingly common mental health issues on college campuses.

According to a recent survey, nearly half of all college students report feeling so depressed that they had trouble functioning, and 15 percent meet the criteria for clinical depression. Untreated depression can lead to suicide, which is the second leading cause of death of college students.

“Many young people are coming to college with an existing diagnosis and treatment history,” said David Fassler, M.D., APA Trustee-at-large and a child and adolescent psychiatrist. “Some of those students might not have made it beyond high school in previous generations, but this means that more young people need access to comprehensive mental health care.”

In January 2005, a Presidential Task Force on Mental Health on College Campuses was formed by APA past President Michelle B. Riba, M.D. M.S. The Task Force will lead APA's effort to enhance awareness about college mental health issues and to support psychiatrists working in college health settings.

“Treatment works. It is important for college-age students to seek care so they can have a healthy mind and lead a healthy life,” said APA past President Michelle B. Riba, M.D. M.S.

During August and September 2005, the APA will conduct a public awareness campaign on college mental health issues and treatment options. This initiative is the next step in APA's nationwide public awareness campaign, “Healthy Minds. Healthy Lives.,” which launched in May 2005 during Mental Health Month and continues with this project. The goal of the campaign is to improve public understanding on mental health and mental disorders.

Free public information about mental health issues for college students and others is available on APA's consumer Web site at www.healthyminds.org.

Note to editors: For personal stories and interviews, contact the Office of Communications and Public Affairs at 703-907-8640 or press@psych.org. Visit www.HealthyMinds.org/collegementalhealth.cfm for key statistics.

About the American Psychiatric Association:

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose more than 37,000 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.

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