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APA Commends Bush Administration's Federal Mental Health Action Agenda

Arlington, Va. - The American Psychiatric Association (APA) today commended President Bush and key administration officials as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) unveiled an ambitious "Federal Mental Health Action Agenda" at a news conference last Friday. The action plan amplifies and puts into operation the recommendations of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health.

"We applaud President Bush, SAMHSA Administrator Charles Curie and Center for Mental Health Services Director A. Kathryn Power for their leadership in establishing the New Freedom Commission on Mental Health in the first place, and for their efforts to make the findings and recommendations of the commission a reality," said APA President Steven S. Sharfstein, M.D.

Sharfstein cited the APA's long-standing interest in revitalizing and reshaping the public mental healthcare system.

"In response to the ongoing crisis in the public mental health system, APA developed its own Vision Statement for a transformed mental health system emphasizing improved access to and funding of mental health care," said Dr. Sharfstein. "The action plan SAMHSA has released is very much in keeping with our own recommendations."

The SAMHSA action plan is an ambitious, multi-year agenda that includes:

- Streamlining coordination of federal mental health policy across numerous federal agencies;
- Investing in public information campaigns on suicide prevention and depression in men;
- Promoting quality care; and
- Emphasizing mental healthcare for children, among many other specific initiatives.

Concluded Dr. Sharfstein: "The Federal Mental Health Action Agenda released last week offers tremendous promise for a public-private partnership as we seek to transform the nation's mental health system. The president, Mr. Curie, Ms. Power and others involved in the project deserve our thanks for their efforts to improve the lives of millions of Americans."

To view SAMHSA's action plan, visit: http://www.samhsa.gov/Federalactionagenda/NFC_TOC.aspx

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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