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## College Students and Alcohol Abuse, a Sobering Look

**Arlington, Va.** – Across the country, students are preparing to begin or return to college. It is a time of learning, growth and enjoying the social atmosphere that thrives on campuses. Most students can balance the mix of academic and social activities, though pressure to participate in binge drinking, drinking large quantities of alcohol most nights during the week, and drinking to feel like the part of the crowd are common occurrences.

Students of legal age who consume alcohol should do so responsibly and in moderation. Unfortunately, many students engage in underage and/or risky drinking that could lead to long term alcohol problems. These patterns include binge drinking and heavy drinking on a regular basis.

“Most students do not connect alcohol abuse with a potential mental health issue,” said Rachel Glick, M.D., American Psychiatric Association (APA) Presidential Task Force on Mental Health on College Campuses co-chair. “If a student feels that alcohol has become a problem, it is important seek care so they can have a healthy mind and lead a healthy life.”

Data from several national surveys indicate that about four in five college students drink and that about half of college student drinkers engage in heavy episodic consumption. The health and social effects of alcohol misuse can be extremely serious and even life threatening both to the individual and to others.

During August 2006, APA will conduct its second annual public awareness campaign on college mental health issues. This initiative supports APA’s nationwide five-year public awareness campaign, “Healthy Minds. Healthy Lives.,” which launched in May 2005 during Mental Health Month. The goal of the campaign is to improve public understanding on mental health and mental disorders.

The APA’s free consumer Web site, [www.HealthyMinds.org](http://www.HealthyMinds.org), features information to help college students understand issues around alcohol abuse and maintain good mental health. A healthy mind is key to having a healthy life. Visit [www.HealthyMinds.org](http://www.HealthyMinds.org) for information about:

- NEW “Let’s Talk Facts” brochure: College Students and Alcohol Abuse
- College Students and Alcohol Abuse Statistics
- College Mental Health Fact Sheet: Depression
- Disasters: Mental Health Recommendations for Students and Colleges
- Eating Disorders: Tips for College Students

**About the American Psychiatric Association:**

The American Psychiatric Association is the nation’s leading medical specialty society whose more than 37,000 physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org) and [www.HealthyMinds.org](http://www.HealthyMinds.org).

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