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Leading Psychiatric Journal Expands Disclosure of Conflict of Interest and Financial Support Guidelines

Arlington, Va. – The editors of *The American Journal of Psychiatry (AJP)*, the official journal of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), today announced in an editorial in the September 2006 issue an expansion of the conflict of interest and financial disclosure policy for authors.

The new policy requires authors to disclose all relationships and financial ties with pharmaceutical companies and other biomedical firms within the last 12 months, even if the study reported in their paper was funded by non-profit or government research funds. Complete disclosures will be published with each article beginning with the October issue. The *AJP* had earlier this year in an editorial in the April issue announced requirements that all authors of editorials and review articles, including its new “Treatment in Psychiatry” series, report similar broad disclosure.

Robert Freedman, M.D., *AJP* editor-in-chief, the lead author of the editorial, stated, “Our expansion of the conflict of interest disclosure policy reflects our commitment that the *AJP* provides evidence-based guidance on psychiatric treatment to our psychiatrist readers and the general public that is free from bias.”

The editorial also asks that new standards be defined for the relationships between psychiatrists and pharmaceutical companies in patient care, medical education and research. Important legitimate interactions between psychiatrists and pharmaceutical companies that result in the development of better treatments should be allowed to continue, while those interactions that have been shown to bias physicians in the recommendation of medications to their patients should be prohibited. The editorial encourages individual psychiatrists, both practitioners and researchers, as well as medical schools and the pharmaceutical companies themselves, to reconsider their roles with respect to boundaries, ethical standards and conflicts of interest.

James H. Scully, Jr., M.D., the Medical Director and CEO of the APA, who is a co-author of the editorial stated, “Our Board of Trustees has taken several actions to strengthen our disclosure and conflict of interest policies for all of our publications, including Practice Guidelines and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.”

Recently the APA began planning a fifth edition of its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, which sets diagnostic criteria for all mental disorders and is expected to be published in 2011.

David Kupfer, M.D., chair of the Task Force that will oversee the upcoming fifth revision of the *DSM* and who is a co-author of the editorial, stated, “What is called for at this point is the greatest possible transparency. Indeed, there may be times when a conflict may not be apparent even to the author at the time an article is published, but when subsequent events -- for example, publication of new information -- may create one. So the safest course seems to be one of disclosure of all relationships whether they appear to represent conflicts at the time of publication or not.”

In addition to the *AJP* Editors, the Editors of *Psychiatric Services*, the *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, *FOCUS*, and *Psychiatric News*, the chair of the APA Steering Committee on Practice Guidelines, and the editor-in-chief of American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc., are co-authors of the editorial.

(*Am J Psychiatry*. 2006; 163: 1481-1483).

Note to Editors: Contact APA's Office of Communications and Public Affairs at 703-907-8640 or press@psych.org for an embargoed copy of editorial.

About the *American Journal of Psychiatry*:

The *American Journal of Psychiatry*, the official journal of the American Psychiatric Association, publishes a monthly issue with scientific articles submitted by psychiatrists and other scientists worldwide. The peer review and editing process is conducted independently of any other American Psychiatric Association components. Therefore, statements in this press release or the articles in the Journal are not official policy statements of the American Psychiatric Association. The Journal's editorial policies conform to the Uniform Requirements of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, of which it is a member. For further information about the Journal visit www.ajp.psychiatryonline.org.

About the American Psychiatric Association:

The American Psychiatric Association is a national 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 and www.HealthyMinds.org.

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