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August 2, 2007

Release No. 07-59

Mental Health 101

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 survey¹, the rate of students reporting ever being diagnosed with depression has increased 56 percent in the last six years, from 10 percent in spring 2000 to 16 percent in spring 2005.

Major depression increases the likelihood of substance abuse, impairs functioning at school; and influences an individual's subsequent development in negative ways. Depression can also co-occur with other disorders, including physical illnesses and other mental disorders, such as anxiety and eating disorders.

"We are seeing more students coming to college with mental health issues," said Jerald Kay, M.D., chair of the American Psychiatric Association's Corresponding Committee on Mental Health on College and University Campuses. "Tragedies like at Virginia Tech only amplify the importance of the availability of mental health services on college campuses. It is important for college-age students to seek care so they can have a healthy mind and lead a healthy life."

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) encourages everyone to learn more about the warnings signs of mental illnesses. For August, www.HealthyMinds.org, the APA's free consumer Web site, features information to help parents learn more about college mental health on topics such as:

- **NEW:** Suicide Prevention TV Public Service Announcement
- "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 38,000 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.

"**Healthy Minds. Healthy Lives.**" is APA's consumer campaign to improve understanding of mental illnesses, psychiatry, and successful treatment options, as well as to reduce stigma. Learn more about these issues and hear people's real-life stories by visiting the campaign's Web site at www.HealthyMinds.org.

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¹ American College Health Association. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment: Reference Group Executive Summary Fall 2006. Baltimore: American College Health Association; 2007.