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For Immediate Release:

Sept. 20, 2007

Release No. 07 - 68

APA Highlights Mental Health Issues during National Hispanic Heritage Month

Arlington, Va – In recognition of National Hispanic Heritage Month, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) highlights the critical need for addressing the mental health needs and issues impacting the Hispanic and Latino Community. The APA has also published its first *Let's Talk Facts* brochure - Mental Health in the Hispanic Community – aimed at the Hispanic community. The brochure underlines factors which attribute to the ongoing mental health issues in the community such as inequities in socioeconomic status, education, and access to health and human services.

“Hispanic Heritage Month, for the American Psychiatric Association, is more than simply recognition. By directing more attention to the ongoing mental health issues and concerns in the Hispanic Community more lives can be saved,” said Andres J. Pumariega, M.D., chair of APA’s Committee of Hispanic Psychiatrists. “The brochure and web site content developed by APA and our committee will also provide valuable resources to aid in promoting the mental health of Latinos and their communities.”

Mental health resources are not equal to the needs of diverse communities across the nation. As with all communities, the Hispanic/Latino population suffers from war-related traumas, depression, suicide and alcohol and drug abuse. This community can also suffer from the added impact of immigration, discrimination, and marginalization within the context of an atmosphere of economic and physical insecurity in our nation.

The Hispanic/Latino community also has limited access and availability of mental health services resulting from language barriers, lack of Hispanic/Latinos mental health professionals, lack of insurance coverage, and the stigma associated still with mental illnesses and treatment.

“It is important to eliminate mental health disparities resulting from language and cultural barriers in order to increase access to treatment,” said Dr. Pumariega. “Eliminating these disparities will require culturally appropriate clinical services, culturally informed public health initiatives, broader community support, and equitable access to quality health care.”

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) - health disparities can mean decreased quality of life, loss of economic opportunities, and perceptions of injustice. For society, these disparities translate into less than optimal productivity, higher health-care costs, and social inequity.

For more information about the Hispanic/Latino Community mental health needs, visit www.HealthyMinds.org.

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About the American Psychiatric Association:

The American Psychiatric Association is a national 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.