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**APA Explores Mental Health Disparities and Substance Abuse through
*OMNA On Tour***

Arlington, Va. – Many Americans in minority communities remain at a disadvantage in learning about and receiving mental health services, including substance abuse treatment, even as the nation becomes more aware of mental health concerns and effective treatments.

In the ongoing effort to educate communities and close the gap of mental health disparities, the American Psychiatric Association Office of Minority and National Affairs (OMNA) will hold a daylong workshop, *OMNA on Tour: Co-Occurring Disorders-No Longer Double Jeopardy*, in Los Angeles on Tuesday, July 22, featuring mental health experts who will discuss improving mental health outcomes for underserved populations in the Los Angeles area with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

OMNA on Tour is a traveling education program designed to inform communities around the nation about the significance and impact on community well-being of ethnic and racial disparities in mental health. The tour aims to foster collaboration among a variety of stakeholders with the goal to develop local action plans to eliminate mental health disparities.

OMNA Director, Annelle Primm, M.D., M.P.H., APA member experts and other mental health professionals will engage constituencies from a wide variety of disciplines, such as but not limited to psychiatrists, primary care physicians, substance abuse treatment providers, community leaders, and local mental health system administrators.

“We are pleased to hold our fifth *OMNA on Tour* in Los Angeles, focusing for the first time on co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders with a call to action for prevention and recovery in diverse populations,” said Dr. Primm. “Our sincere hope is that this program will enlighten the Los Angeles community about the impact of co-occurring disorders on overall health.”

“In addition, we want to encourage strategic collaboration among a variety of stakeholders including consumers and families, health professionals of all types, the faith community, the correctional system, the social service system, and legislators and policymakers,” Primm said. “Through such action, concerned citizens can make a difference by ensuring that people in need of treatment for mental illness and substance abuse in communities of color receive high quality, culturally relevant care and experience recovery in order to lead enriching, healthy lives.”

The Los Angeles tour stop will feature many honored speakers, including Annelle Primm, M.D., M.P.H., director, Office of Minority and National Affairs, American Psychiatric Association; Marcia Goin, M.D., clinical professor, Keck School of Medicine of USC; Carl C. Bell, M.D., president and CEO, Community and Mental Health Council & Foundation, Inc. and clinical professor, Psychiatry and Public Health at the University of Illinois at

Chicago; Donald R. Vereen, M.D., M.P.H., director, Community-Based Public Health, University of Michigan, School of Public Health; Nancy Carter, executive director, National Alliance on Mental Illness of Urban Los Angeles; and, Michelle Clark, M.D., chief psychiatrist, South Central Health and Rehabilitation Program.

The daylong event will cover topics from the prevalence, impact and prevention of co-occurring disorders for the practitioner and consumer to discussions on what is working in the communities.

OMNA on Tour: Co-Occurring Disorders-No Longer Double Jeopardy will take place on Tuesday, July 22, 2008 from 8:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the California Endowment in Los Angeles. For registration information please call 703-907-8539 or register online at www.psych.org/omnaontour/.

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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.