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APA Testifies Before Senate Special Committee on Aging

ARLINGTON, Va. (July 29, 2009) — The American Psychiatric Association has been on the forefront in taking steps to separate marketing from medical education while seeking ways to foster relationships that will lead to the development of new treatments for patients, APA Medical Director and CEO James H. Scully, Jr., M.D., testified today.

Patients need to be able to rely on the objective recommendations by their physicians and in turn, physicians must be able to rely on the objectivity of research as it pertains to the safe and effective use of medications and medical devices, Dr. Scully said in testimony before the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing “Medical Research and Education: Higher Learning or Higher Earning.”

“The APA has long understood the need for a comprehensive disclosure policy based on clarity and transparency. We continue to work with other societies to respond to the call by the Institute of Medicine to develop guidelines and standards for managing potential Conflicts of Interests,” Dr. Scully said.

In written testimony, Dr. Scully discussed the APA’s Board of Trustees recent decision to phase out industry-supported education programs and meals at the APA scientific meetings and the ongoing monitoring of the Continued Medical Education activities. The APA was the first professional society to take steps to eliminate industry-sponsored education programs at its meetings.

Dr. Scully went on to testify on the APA’s continued support for innovation by the pharmaceutical industry in order for more patients to benefit from future improvements in treatments. He noted, “The challenge is to do this in a way that protects integrity while supporting innovation and better treatment and outcomes for our patients.”

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 prevention, diagnosis, treatment and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.

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