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APA Board Adopts New Code of Conduct

ARLINGTON, Va. (June 11, 2010) — The Board of Trustees for the American Psychiatric Association approved a new code of conduct aimed at creating greater transparency for APA's relationships with other organizations and managing potential conflicts of interest among the APA, industry, staff and individuals who serve as elected members of the APA.

This new code formalizes a number of practices that were in place and establishes a new board-level Conflict of Interest Committee, which will oversee the APA's relationships to outside organizations. The committee will be responsible for implementing the principles and standards and putting into practice policies to support the code of conduct.

"The entire field of medicine is moving toward greater transparency in its relationships to industry, and the APA has been at the forefront of the trend. While we think there is a place for industry support of our organization's goals, we believe any relationship should be transparent and that marketing should be clearly separate from medical education," said James H. Scully, Jr., M.D., APA medical director and CEO.

Under the new standards, any relationships with other organizations that the APA enters into should be consistent with the APA mission and improve the delivery of mental health care. Among the elements endorsed by the board are:

- Financial relationships between developers of educational programs and research activity and outside organizations are to be clearly stated;
- The development by the APA of educational programs, whether or not they provide continuing medical education credits, are to follow the ACCME standards for independent and unbiased presentations; and
- Advertising in APA publications, meetings, or websites does not entail endorsement of any product or manufacturer.

The board adopted special guidelines for the committee responsible for developing APA's Practice Guidelines for the assessment and treatment of specific psychiatric disorders.

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose physician members specialize in the 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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