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## **APA Deputy Medical Director Testifies to the APA's Support of America's Military**

ARLINGTON, Va. (Feb. 24, 2010) – APA Deputy Medical Director Annelle Primm, M.D., testified before the House Committee on Veterans Affairs hearing today on appropriate treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Dr. Primm emphasized APA's strong support for immediate and seamless access to treatment for America's armed service members and their families, and emphasized the importance of advocacy for returning service members with psychiatric and substance use disorders.

“We at the APA are hopeful that today's hearing and testimony will help promote access to information, encourage expanded support for research, and enhance the ability of returning members of the military and their families to advocate effectively for the treatment they need and deserve,” she said.

Dr. Primm strongly disagreed with those claiming that antidepressants typically used for treating PTSD do not work or cause patients to consider suicide.

“I note that many of the most dramatic improvements in the effective treatment of mental illness have come as a result of newer and better medications, especially a class of antidepressants called SSRIs, which can be utilized to help manage PTSD symptoms,” she stated. “Contrary to frequent reports in the popular media, there is no evidence to suggest that these medications increase the risk of actual suicide.”

Dr. Primm stressed that family members of returning service personnel play an important role in recognizing possible PTSD symptoms and encouraging their returned soldiers to seek treatment from a qualified mental health professional when necessary.

“To this end, the APA has a consumer Web site, [www.Healthyminds.org](http://www.Healthyminds.org), which provides patients and families with information about the symptoms and treatment of depression, PTSD and substance use disorders.”

The APA is also a proud partner of [“Give an Hour,”](http://www.GiveanHour.org) a volunteer organization that provides professional mental health and substance use disorder services through a network of professionals who volunteer their services for an hour a week to active and returning military, National Guard, veterans and their families.

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](http://www.psych.org) and [www.HealthyMinds.org](http://www.HealthyMinds.org).

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