

# News RELEASE

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## **APA Addresses Mental Health Disparities During Mental Illness Awareness Week – October 3-9, 2004**

Arlington, Va. – During the annual Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) observance from October 3-9, 2004, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) will focus on “Mental Health Disparities in the Community” at the 56<sup>th</sup> Institute on Psychiatric Services (IPS), October 6 – 10, in Atlanta, Georgia. Such topics as “Multiculturalism: The Changing Face of America” and “Cultural Attitudes and Perceptions in the Diagnosis of ADHD” will be covered in various lectures, workshops and symposiums during the four day conference.

“Mental Illness Awareness Week is an opportunity for the mental health community to reach out to patients, families and the general public to educate them about the real-life issues that surround mental illness,” said APA medical director James H. Scully, Jr., M.D. “This year, our IPS meeting will highlight ways in which we can assure adequate mental health care to all Americans, regardless of their racial or ethnic background.”

Mental Illness Awareness Week was created 21 years ago by the APA and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), in an effort to make the public aware that mental illnesses are real and disabling illnesses that can be treated effectively, and to combat stigmas associated with them. This year's theme, "Unity through Diversity," indicates the hope that mental illness can be accepted and treated across all social and economic boundaries. The commemorative week begins on the first Sunday of October each year.

During Mental Illness Awareness week hundreds of additional mental health advocacy groups across the country will hold events to remind the public that mental illnesses are real, disabling, diagnosable and treatable.

The NAMI, Washington, D.C. chapter will hold a recognition dinner on October 15, 2004 from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. at the Blackburn Center Art Gallery Lounge in Washington, D.C., to honor three individuals who have been supportive of the mental health community: Nancy Lee Head, former Program Officer of NAMI-D.C. (private sector); Sandy Allen, Washington, D.C. City Council member and chair of the Human Resources Committee, (public sector); and APA Member, Dr. Luther Robinson, Associate Professor Emeritus at Howard University (clinical community).

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For more information on the NAMI Washington, D.C. chapter's recognition dinner, please contact the branch office at 202-546-0646. For more information on APA's 56<sup>th</sup> IPS meeting and to view the meeting schedule, please visit [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org).

**The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society, founded in 1844, whose nearly 36,000 physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. For more information, visit the APA Web site at [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org).**

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