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Mrs. United States Vows to Help Destigmatize Mental Illness

Psychiatrist Gariane Gunter, M.D., Takes Home 2008 Mrs. United States Top Prize

ARLINGTON, VA (August 5, 2008) – Psychiatrist Gariane Gunter, M.D., the newly crowned Mrs. United States, has announced she will spend her reign working to increase awareness of mental health issues and to eliminate the stigma of mental illness. She plans to travel within her state of South Carolina and across the country as she advocates for the importance of seeking care.

“This incredible opportunity gives me a platform to educate on issues I feel most strongly about, said Dr. Gunter. “The public needs to know that mental illnesses are as real as any other illness and that treatment works. Many times people do not have the resources to get the help they need. I am honored to be their voice.”

“Dr. Gunter will be an excellent spokesperson to help the mental health community work to eliminate stigmas associated with mental illnesses,” said James Scully, M.D., Medical Director/CEO of the American Psychiatric Association. “We are thrilled that she will help to spread the word and to make a difference for patients and their families.”

Dr. Gunter already has plans to introduce and teach "Breaking the Silence: Teaching the Next Generation About Mental Illness," a National Alliance on Mental Illness anti-stigma program, to fifth graders in her hometown.

“If we can teach our children the truth about mental illness now, then they will be armed against stigma in the future,” Dr. Gunter said.

Dr. Gunter is a third-year psychiatry resident at Palmetto Health in South Carolina. She told judges that she's found a harmonic balance between handling motherhood, being a wife and completing her psychiatry residency, as well as sharing her platform of mental health advocacy.

View [photo](#) of Dr. Gunter winning Mrs. United States title.

View [photo](#) of Dr. Gunter and her family.

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.

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