



For Information Contact:

Eve Herold, 703-907-8640

press@psych.org

Jaime Valora, 703-907-8562

jvalora@psych.org

For Immediate Release:

March 25, 2009

Release No. 09-18

The American Psychiatric Association Phases Out Industry-Supported Symposia

ARLINGTON, Va. (March 25, 2009) — The American Psychiatric Association Board of Trustees voted this month to phase out industry-supported symposia along with industry-supplied meals at its annual meetings.

With this move, the APA remains at the leading edge of a trend throughout medicine to increase transparency and reduce potential financial conflicts of interest. Symposia at major medical meetings that supply doctors with continuing medical education credits are sometimes funded by pharmaceutical companies, a practice that has invited a concern that the sessions may be biased in favor of the sponsoring company's medications.

“Although we took great care to avoid biased reporting at all our symposia, we came to the conclusion that the only way to totally eliminate the risk is to have the symposia supported by the APA alone,” said Nada L. Stotland, M.D., M.P.H., president of the APA.

The decision includes the elimination of industry-supplied meals that were provided during the industry-supported symposia. “There is a perception that accepting meals provided by pharmaceutical companies may have a subtle influence on doctors' prescribing habits,” said James H. Scully Jr., M.D., the APA's Medical Director and CEO.

“While industry-funded meals used to be normal operating procedure at medical meetings, a sea change is currently underway in how we manage industry relationships,” he said. “What was acceptable five years ago isn't necessarily acceptable today. Change is necessary, and the APA wants to stay at the forefront of a new and better way of doing things.”

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.

###