

NEWS Release

American Psychiatric Association, 1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1825, Arlington, VA 22209

For Information Contact:

Amy Levey, 703/907-8534

alevey@psych.org

For Immediate Release

October 6, 2003

Release No. 03-43

NATIONAL DEPRESSION SCREENING DAY *October 9, 2003*

Arlington, VA -- National Depression Screening Day, a nationwide program that provides information about the signs, symptoms, and treatment of depression and other mental illnesses, will be observed Thursday, October 9 as a part of Mental Illness Awareness Week, October 5-11, 2003.

Depression is a serious medical illness that affects how people feel, think, and act. It is a common illness that affects 19 million Americans each year. Depression does not discriminate; it affects men and women, young and old, and people of all races, cultures, and incomes. Fortunately, depression is very treatable. The majority (80% -90%) of people who receive treatment experience significant improvement, and individuals can benefit from medical care.

People with depression experience persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, or loss of interest in usual activities, in addition to five or more of the following symptoms for at least two consecutive weeks:

- ? Changes in appetite that result in weight losses or gains not related to dieting
- ? Insomnia or oversleeping
- ? Loss of energy or increased fatigue
- ? Restlessness or irritability
- ? Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
- ? Difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions
- ? Thoughts of death or suicide or attempts at suicide

Unfortunately, individuals may not recognize their symptoms as signs of an illness, or they may fear the reactions of others. As a result, millions of people with depression do not seek treatment and unnecessarily experience problems at their jobs or in their relationships.

National Depression Screening Day does not provide a diagnosis for an individual, but helps identify symptoms and determines whether they should seek an evaluation from a mental health professional. To find a screening site, call 1-800-520-6373 or visit <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/locator/NDSmap.htm>.

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society, founded in 1844, whose 35,000 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.

Mental Illness Awareness Week was created 20 years ago by the American Psychiatric Association and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, in an effort to make the public aware that mental illnesses are real and disabling illnesses that can be treated effectively, and to combat the stigma association with them.

###