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NEW CAMPAIGN HELPS AMERICANS DEAL WITH STRESSFUL TIMES

*Mental Health America's "Live Your Life WellSM"
Offers 10 Proven Tools to Combat Stress and Promote Well-Being*

AUSTIN, TX. (Monday, May 4, 2009) — From financial worries to family responsibilities, Americans are dealing with ever-increasing stress in their lives. To help handle these challenges, Mental Health America and Austin-based Mental Health America of Texas today launched an innovative public education campaign to provide people with tools to deal with stressful times. Called **Live Your Life WellSM**, it features a wealth of research-based information, coupled with strategies that can help combat stress and promote well-being.

“The economic crisis has added to the daily stress that all American families face, and may be increasing their risk of depression and anxiety as well,” said Lynn Lasky Clark, president and CEO of Mental Health America of Texas. “**Live Your Life WellSM** is the first program in the U.S. that brings together the information needed to help all Americans in difficult times and throughout their lives. Good mental health is much more than just the absence of illness – it’s about being able to handle life’s challenges and even flourish.”

The heart of the program is the **Live Your Life WellSM** Web site (www.LiveYourLifeWell.org), which provides 10 evidence-based tools to bolster mental health. “Research is clear that good mental health is essential for overall health and well-being,” said Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D., noted author of *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach for Getting the Life You Want* and a psychologist at University of California Riverside. “There are actions that people can take that can improve their mental health and increase their well-being, and even modest changes can make a real difference.”

Live Your Life WellSM is unlike any other public education campaign. It offers scientific evidence for a range of concrete actions that promote mental wellness. The contents are derived from decades of behavioral and medical research with thousands of individuals, often conducted at major universities or funded by government agencies. Written in consumer-friendly language, the program offers dozens of easy-to-follow suggestions from behavioral health experts and tips on sustaining the advice.

The **Live Your Life WellSM** program details the 10 tools and many of their benefits, including:

- **Connect with Others.** Research suggests that people who feel connected are happier and healthier – and may even live longer.
- **Stay Positive.** People who regularly focus on the positive in their lives are less upset by painful memories.
- **Get Physically Active.** Exercise relieves tense muscles, improves mood and sleep, and increases energy and strength.
- **Help Others.** Research suggests that those who consistently help other people experience less depression, greater calm and fewer pains.

- **Get Enough Rest.** People who don't get enough sleep face a number of possible health risks, including weight gain, decreased memory, impaired driving and heart problems.
- **Create Joy and Satisfaction.** Positive emotions can boost a person's ability to bounce back from stress.
- **Eat Well.** Eating healthy food and regular meals can increase energy, lower the risk of developing certain diseases and influence mood.
- **Take Care of Your Spirit.** People who have strong spiritual lives may be healthier and live longer. Spirituality seems to cut the stress that can contribute to disease.
- **Deal Better with Hard Times.** People who get support, problem-solve or focus on the positives in their lives are likely to handle tough times better.
- **Get Professional Help if You Need It.** If the problems in life are stopping a person from functioning well or feeling good, professional help can make a big difference.

“Just as Americans have learned there are things they can do to reduce their risk of heart disease and other illnesses, Mental Health America of Texas wants to help people learn what they can do both to protect their mental health in tough times and also to improve their mental well-being throughout their lives,” explained Lasky Clark.

The campaign is being launched for Mental Health Month in May. More details on each of the tools are available on the campaign Web site, which is free to the public at www.LiveYourLifeWell.org. Additionally, people in Austin can contact Mental Health America of Texas for more information, to locate mental health resources or help finding a mental health professional, by calling 512-454-3725 or visiting www.mhatexas.org.

Celebrating over 70 years of mental health education and advocacy, Mental Health America of Texas is the state's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping all people live mentally healthier lives.

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CDC State by State Data on “Frequent Mental Distress”

A new study shows that rates of stress, depression and emotional problems vary by geographic region. The findings, to be published in the June 2009 *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, is based on about 2.4 million U.S. adults who participated in CDC surveys from 1993 to 2001 and 2003 to 2006 as part of the ongoing Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System study.

Participants were asked by phone how many of the previous 30 days their mental health -- including stress, depression, and emotional problems -- was "not good." People who said their mental health was "not good" at least 14 out of the previous 30 days had "frequent mental distress," according to CDC researchers.

Here's the percentage of adults by state with frequent mental distress for both time periods combined.

State	% of Residents with 14 or More Mentally Unhealthy Days
Hawaii	6.6%
South Dakota	6.7%
Washington, D.C.	7.4%
Kansas	7.5%
Nebraska	7.5%
North Dakota	7.5%
Arizona	7.6%
Iowa	7.7%
Montana	7.7%
Illinois	7.9%
Connecticut	8.0%
Wisconsin	8.1%
Minnesota	8.2%
North Carolina	8.4%
Alaska	8.5%
Maryland	8.5%
Vermont	8.5%
Ohio	8.6%
Wyoming	8.6%
New Jersey	8.7%
Oklahoma	8.8%
New Hampshire	8.8%
Maine	9.0%
Virginia	9.0%
Washington	9.2%
Colorado	9.3%
Louisiana	9.3%
Pennsylvania	9.3%
South Carolina	9.3%
Idaho	9.4%
Tennessee	9.4%
Georgia	9.5%
Massachusetts	9.5%
Utah	9.5%
New York	9.6%
New Mexico	9.7%
Rhode Island	9.7%
Texas	9.7%
Delaware	9.8%
Missouri	9.9%
Oregon	10.0%
Arkansas	10.1%
California	10.1%
Florida	10.1%
Indiana	10.3%
Michigan	10.5%