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SYMPOSIUM AIMED AT REDUCING SUICIDES IN TEXAS

AUSTIN, TX. (Friday, August 28, 2009) — Mental Health America of Texas along with the Texas Suicide Prevention Council and the Texas Department of State Health Services will conduct the Texas Suicide Prevention Symposium on Sept. 2-3, 2009 at the Doubletree Hotel Austin to help bring suicide prevention information to families and professionals.

Current data from the Centers for Disease Control support the need for a reduction in the overall suicide rate and in the number of suicide attempts by adolescents: Texas has a number of counties where the suicide rate is at or above the national 90th percentile rank, and suicide ranks in the top 10 causes of injury death for all ages.

“Mental Health America of Texas stresses the importance of reducing misunderstanding and misconceptions about suicide issues, such as who is at risk under what circumstances, and how to get help prior to taking action,” said Lynn Lasky Clark, LMSW, president and CEO of Mental Health America of Texas.

The symposium will feature three keynote speakers. Terry L. Wise, J.D., suicide survivor and author of *Waking Up: Climbing Through the Darkness*, Wise will talk about an attempt survivor’s perspective and strategies for families and attempters. David Rudd, Ph. D., University of Utah, will present on the management and treatment of suicidality, as well as risk assessment and clinical management. Sean Joe, Ph.D., University of Michigan, will speak about how youth suicide prevention relates to culture, race and immigration.

“The 200 participant event is sold-out, evidence that there is high interest in Texas in preventing suicide,” said Mary Ellen Nudd, Vice President of Mental Health America of Texas.

Participants, include mental health professionals, attempters, family members, educators and those who have lost someone to suicide, will take part in workshops on a variety of topics, including:

- Practical steps for postvention in communities and schools
- Social networks – new frontiers in reaching young adults
- Suicide prevention for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth
- African American youth research and implications
- Prevention and postvention policies and procedures for schools and colleges
- Facts about youth suicide and learning life-saving skills
- Building and sustaining local suicide prevention coalitions.

For more information about Mental Health America of Texas, please visit www.mhatexas.org.

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