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**Mental Health America
of Licking County**

Press Release

Ohio Ranks 43rd In National Study of Depression and Suicide

First-of-Its-Kind Analysis Links Greater Access to Mental Health Treatments and Services to Better Depression Outcomes

Newark, OH, November 28, 2007: In a study released today by Mental Health America, the nation's leading nonprofit dedicated to helping people live mentally healthier lives, Ohio ranked 43rd in the nation in rates of depression and suicide.

Ranking America's Mental Health: An Analysis of Depression Across the State reports that in 2004-05, 8.54% of Ohio's adolescent population experienced a major depressive episode as did 9% of the adult population. This compares to a national average of 8.95% for adolescents and 8.05% for adults. The report also notes that Ohioans reported an average of 4.03 poor mental health days which compares to a national average of 3.31.

Heading the list of the nation's most mentally healthy states was South Dakota which finished first in each of the study's four measures: mental health resources (the number of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers per capita), access to treatment, treatment utilization (the percentage of the population using mental health services), and socioeconomic characteristics (the more educated the population, the better the state's depression status).

In addition to being a sobering message for public policy makers, the study is part of a strategy by Mental Health America and its network of more than 320 affiliates to spur the development of a public health monitoring system to monitor the nation's mental health and the specific impact of depression.

Depression is one of the most common mental health conditions in America and affects more than 21 million children and adults. It is the principal cause of the 30,000 suicides in the U.S. each year—each of which is wholly preventable through early intervention and treatment.

For Release 5 p.m. EDT, November 28, 2007

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In addition to the human cost, there are significant financial costs draining \$83 billion each year from the U.S. economy.

“This report provides an opportunity for Ohio’s leaders to examine its citizens’ depression status and begin to allocate resources to improve our mental health,” said Paddy Kutz, Executive Director of Mental Health America of Licking County. “We can and should provide better treatment and services for our citizens suffering from this chronic illness. Depression is real and with the right resources, it is treatable. Reducing the state’s depression rate should be a top priority.”

Kutz noted that the state can take steps to improve its ranking by taking steps to improve coverage for mental health, ending discriminatory practices in insurance and assuring that qualified mental health professionals are available to serve everyone in need.

The complete study is available online at <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/state-ranking>.

Mental Health America of Licking County, an affiliate of Mental Health America, is a member agency of the United Way, the Community Mental Health & Recovery Board and NAMI.

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