

**For Information Contact:**

Eve Herold, 703-907-8640

press@psych.org

Erin Connors, 703-907-8562

econnors@psych.org

Jan. 20, 2011

Release No. 11-04

Psychiatrists Oppose Attempt to Repeal Health Care Laws

ARLINGTON, Va. (Jan. 20, 2011)— The American Psychiatric Association, the medical specialty representing psychiatric physicians nationwide, opposes legislation approved by the U.S. House of Representatives to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), together with related health reform provisions of the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010.

“Last year’s reform law made significant improvements in access to treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders for millions of Americans who lack basic insurance,” said APA Medical Director and CEO James H. Scully, Jr., M.D. “It is imperative that we stand up and continue the fight in order to retain the gains we have made for access to health care, including mental health care, for all Americans, no matter their health status, employment or financial situation.”

The House approved the health reform repeal bill on Wednesday, by a vote of 245-189, but the measure is unlikely to get a vote in the Senate and President Obama has indicated he would veto it.

Among the most important protections enacted as part of health reform are those that:

- Bar insurers from denying health coverage due to pre-existing conditions
- Prevent insurers from dropping coverage due to illness
- Require insurers to provide guaranteed issue and renewal of coverage
- Permit dependent young adults to remain on their parents’ insurance to age 26
- Define mental health and substance use disorder treatment as mandatory essential benefits
- Require “parity” for treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders for insurance sold in state-run exchanges
- Establishing national Centers of Excellence for treatment of depression and bipolar illness

“The APA recognizes that federal law is rarely free of controversy and seldom perfect, and ‘PPACA’ is no exception. Nevertheless, we believe our patients are far better served by refining last year’s reform law than scrapping it and starting again. We therefore oppose the repeal effort, H.R. 2, and regret House action to approve it,” Dr. Scully said.

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.

###