



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – John M. Colmers, Secretary

Office of Public Relations

Karen Black, Director
410-767-6490

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mental Health Month Kicks Off With ‘Walk For The Mind Of America’

BALTIMORE, MD (April 26, 2007) -- The fifth Annual NAMIWalks -- *Walk for the Mind of America* -- will be held on Sunday, April 29 at Centennial Park's Pavilion D in Howard County. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m. and the walk will start at 11:00 a.m.

"This walk is an opportunity for everyone, stakeholders and the public alike, to come together to spread the message that mental illness is treatable," said DHMH Secretary John Colmers. "It helps diminish the stigma that exists, offers visible support, and encourages those individuals with mental illness in their journey toward recovery."

The 2.4-mile awareness walk, sponsored by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Maryland (NAMI-MD), kicks off the May celebration of National Mental Health Month. It is designed to highlight the importance of education, advocacy and support for persons diagnosed with a mental illness and their families. Activities include face painting and a jazz band presentation.

"We are honored to continue collaborations with NAMI on this public-mental health awareness event," said Brian Hepburn, M.D., executive director of the DHMH Mental Hygiene Administration. "This event continues to be successful due to many individuals and agencies committed to fighting stigma, and in helping individuals with mental illness recover."

Approximately 325,000 Maryland residents between the ages of 15-54 experienced some form of a depressive disorder during the last year; fewer than half sought treatment. One in five Maryland families are affected by mental illness.

###