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**MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK CITY
RECEIVES GRANT TO EXPAND ITS WORK ON BEHALF OF
VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

NEW YORK, NY – June 21, 2010 – The Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC) announced today the receipt of a grant from the New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth) to expand and strengthen both the Veterans’ Mental Health Coalition of New York City and the Veteran’s Health Alliance of Long Island. The coalition, created by MHA-NYC in collaboration with the National Alliance on Mental Illness of NYC (NAMI-NYC Metro), works to improve access to, and quality of, mental health and substance abuse care for veterans and their families. The Veterans Health Alliance of Long Island, a project of the Mental Health Association of Nassau County, promotes the health and well-being of Long Island veterans and their families through advocacy and a broad array of services.

Over a two-year period, support from the \$125,000 grant will allow the coalition to expand by:

- Developing achievable policy agendas promoting appropriate, accessible, high-quality services for veterans and their families with behavioral health problems;
- Offering additional public and professional educational programs for mental health providers, veterans, service members and their families; and
- Building collaborative working relationships around the state with other organizations concerned about veterans’ mental health.

“Our veterans with mental health needs deserve our help,” said Giselle Stolper, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of New York City. “The New York State Health Foundation has been at the forefront of responding to these needs, and we are extremely grateful to the Foundation for awarding us this grant, which will allow us to take important next steps in addressing the unmet mental health challenges of veterans, service members, and their families.”

“We owe our veterans and their families the best possible health care and mental health services when they come back home,” said James R. Knickman, Ph.D., President and CEO of the New York State Health Foundation. “These coalitions in New York City and on Long Island represent the organizations most committed to that vision, and we’re proud to support their efforts.”

“This grant provides a great opportunity to mobilize efforts to offer essential services to veterans and their families,” said Herb Ruben, Project Director for the Veterans’ Mental Health Coalition of New York City and the Veteran’s Health Alliance of Long Island. “Based upon my own experience as a Marine Corps veteran, I know how critical these services can be.”

Veterans returning to civilian life from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from tragically high rates of mental and substance use disorders. They are twice as likely as the general population to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression or substance abuse; have twice the risk of suicide; are more than twice as likely to be homeless, and 20% more likely to be unemployed.

Their families also suffer: the strain during deployment is tremendous, and the return of the veterans requires great adaptation. Marriages too often collapse, and children are at increased risk of experiencing emotional difficulties and struggling in school.

More than half of veterans and their families do not get help to deal with their emotional challenges.

The Mental Health Association of New York City formed the Veterans' Mental Health Coalition of New York City in collaboration with the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City. The mission of the Coalition is to promote the mental health and well-being of New York service members, veterans, and their families through education, information, collaboration, and promotion of a comprehensive array of services. The Coalition consists of a cross-section of veterans' service and advocacy organizations; behavioral health, health, and social services providers; and local, state and federal government officials.

Mental Health Association of New York City (MHA-NYC) is a nonprofit organization that addresses mental health needs in New York City and across the nation. It is a local organization with national impact and has a three-part mission of services, advocacy and education. MHA-NYC identifies unmet needs and develops culturally sensitive programs to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness while promoting the importance of mental health. www.mhaofnyc.org

The New York State Health Foundation is a private Foundation dedicated to improving the health of all New Yorkers. NYSHealth has a three-part mission: expanding health insurance coverage, increasing access to high-quality health care services, and improving public and community health by educating New Yorkers about health issues and empowering communities to address them. www.nyshealth.org.

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