



STATE OF MARYLAND

# DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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## Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

BALTIMORE, MD (May 1, 2008) -- The sixth Annual NAMIWalks -- *Walk for the Mind of America* will be held on Saturday, May 3 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.

"By walking together, a broad cross section of Marylanders demonstrate their firm belief that mental health matters," said Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Secretary John Colmers. "Their continued support of these awareness and community-education activities helps diminish the stigma associated with mental illness and encourages individuals to seek the help they need to recover."

This 2.4-mile awareness walk 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 serious mental illness and their families.

The event is sponsored by DHMH and the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Maryland (NAMI-MD.) Activities include a moon bounce and jazz band presentation. Chris Schoff of NASCAR will be present to sign autographs.

"The Mental Hygiene Administration is honored to be able to continue its partnership with NAMI in this awareness event that breaks down barriers in getting individuals the help they need, and furthers empowers individuals in their own recovery," said Brian Hepburn, M.D., executive director of the DHMH Mental Hygiene Administration.

Approximately 325,000 residents of Maryland 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.

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