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BLACK PSYCHIATRISTS OF AMERICA

January 16, 2012

Dr. A. Alwan  
Non-Communicable Diseases & Mental Health  
World Health Organization  
Avenue Appia 2D  
Geneva 1202 SWITZERLAND

Dear Dr. Alwan:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Black Psychiatrists of America in support of recent communications that you have received from Prof. Eliot Sorel, M.D., Founder of the Conflict Management Section of the World Psychiatric Association, Prof. Pedro Ruiz, M.D., President of the World Psychiatric Association and David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D., former Surgeon General of the United States of America indicating a need give serious consideration to the inclusion of mental disorders in the area of "Non-Communicable Diseases" (NCD) by the United Nations. This should be viewed as a priority due to the nature of such disorders relative to the issues of parity and their effects across the spectrum of all medical illnesses in general.

As we strive worldwide to improve the quality of health for the patients that we serve and strengthen our integrative health care approaches to better benefit them to that end, it is critical that the inclusion of mental illness be brought to the table as a critical and integral part of a more comprehensive approach to health care. The failure to do so not only deprives our patients of a reasonable quality of life and basic human rights but is costly to society from all indicators studied including but not limited to: work force productivity, health care financing, chronic complications and prolonging the healing process in physical disease and

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illness, as well. The failure of progressive societies to realize that “psyche and soma” are interrelated in every aspect of human existence is tantamount to putting a plastic bandage on a major rupture. It simply just does not work.

So, on behalf of our medical association, the Black Psychiatrists of America, with membership throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Africa, we want to take this opportunity to weigh in on this critical concept and encourage the support of your organization in helping to champion the cause of integrating the mental health needs of the patients that we serve with their total health care needs. We look forward to your support and working cooperatively with you to achieve this goal. Thank you!

Sincerely,

*P.A. Newton, M.D., MPH, M.A.*

P. A. Newton, M.D., MPH, M.A.  
National President  
Diplomat of the American Board of  
Psychiatry & Neurology

Cc: Eliot Sorel, M.D.  
Pedro Ruiz, M.D.  
David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D.  
Annelle Primm, M.D., MPH  
William B. Lawson, M.D., Ph.D.  
Rahn Bailey, M.D.

PAN/p

Note: This is an approved electronic signature of Dr. Patricia Newton