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**Mental Health Association of RI
Offers Help During Rhode Island PBS Broadcast of
MEN GET DEPRESSION**

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (August 21, 2008) – How is it possible in the country leading the world in medical science, one in four men have a disabling illness that torments them and their families, and most never receive treatment for it?

Men Get Depression is a one-hour documentary that explores depression's corrosive effect on the self, relationships, and careers, through the intimate profiles of real men, including a former NFL Quarterback, a Fortune 500 CEO, an Iraq War veteran, a university professor, a pastor and others. Rhode Island PBS will broadcast the film on **Thursday, August 28 at 8 PM** (channel 36, digital 36.1, cable 8, DirecTV36, Dish 7776).

As part of a community outreach initiative, trained information specialists from the Mental Health Association of Rhode Island (MHARI) will be at Rhode Island PBS studios to take confidential calls from viewers off the air during the film and for 30 minutes after the broadcast (until 9:30 PM). MHARI, a mental health advocacy and research agency in Pawtucket, will provide information about screening, counseling, treatment, and answer other mental health questions viewers may have.

"Depression is treatable. But it takes that first step," said Vivian Weisman, executive director of MHARI. "Sometimes it's a family member of a man suffering from undiagnosed depression who recognizes the symptoms. We invite viewers to make the call, ask questions, and find the right support and treatment resources."

Why do so few men seek help?

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"Men often feel weak or ashamed, that it's not manly to feel sad," says producer and director, Grady Watts. "We hope this program will show men that they are not alone and that treatment can make a big difference in their lives and in the lives of the people who love them."

The documentary is dramatically structured in four acts:

- 'Putting a name on it' - men awakening to the awareness that something is gravely wrong that they can't control.
- 'Not just me, but also those around me' – an exploration of depression's collateral damage, pain, and injury to relationships.
- 'I need help and it's okay to ask for it' - personal accounts acceptance that help is needed and experiences with both medication and talk therapy.
- 'Treatment works' - how sticking with treatment has changed men's lives, relationships and careers.

State of the Art, an Academy Award® winning communications company, developed and produced all elements of the Men Get Depression Campaign. Their work is focused on using media to promote social change in health and education.

"State of the Art began developing Men Get Depression more than 6 years ago," says company President, Geraldine Wurzburg. "We were motivated by the recognition that stigma towards depression and other mental illnesses is deeply entrenched in American society and that it particularly deters awareness and treatment among men."

The team has extensive experience addressing mental health issues, stigma, cultural barriers and improving understanding of treatment. Several leading experts also contributed to the program. Dr. John Greden, Director of the University of Michigan's Depression Center, gives a perspective on recent neuroscience research findings on the relationship of stress and depression. Dr. Francisco Fernandez of the University of South Florida reflects on his experience providing care to his Latino patients. Also, John Head, author of "Standing in the Shadows: Understanding and Overcoming Depression in Black Men," shares his own personal experience with the disease and its effects on his family.

WSBE Rhode Island PBS is owned and operated by the Rhode Island Public Telecommunications Authority, a quasi-public agency of the State of Rhode Island. Rhode Island PBS is a viewer-supported member of the Public Broadcasting Service. Now celebrating its 40th anniversary year, Rhode Island PBS uses the power of commercial-free media to educate, inform, engage, and inspire viewers of all ages. For more information about the programs and services at Rhode Island PBS, visit www.RIpbs.org.

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